ABHINAVAGUPTA

GĪTĀRTHASAṄGRAHA

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY

BY

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LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1983

ISBN 90 04 06736 1

PRINTED IN BELGIUM

PREFACE

Anything that comes from the pen of Abhinavagupta is worthy of study, for he was one of India's greatest scholars. The dates of his works fall between 980 and 1020 of the Christian Era. They were written in Kashmir and I know of no evidence that Abhinava ever left his native province. Kashmir had been a leading province of India in several departments of learning for more than a century before Abhinava's time. In poetics and literary criticism its position was unchallenged. In grammar Kaiyaṭa had given it a reputation equal to the olders centers to the east and south. Then there was the development of Kashmir Śaivism to which it is harder to assign a relative value, for who can say that one school of religious ritual and metaphysics is superior to another? In subtlety and neatness of system, at any rate, Kashmir Śaivism can stand comparison with any Hindu or Buddhist school of its time. It was the genius of Abhinavagupta to bring together these areas of the Kashmiri tradition. After the fashion of his time most of his writings are in the form of commentaries on or summaries of older works: commentaries on the dramaturgist Bharata, the literary critic Ānandavardhana, the Śaiva mystic Utpala; summaries of the Śaiva *tantras* and of the *pratyabhijñā* philosophy. While he professes to be explaining what is ancient, what he writes of is often strikingly original. On grammar Abhinava wrote no specific work, but his knowledge of the subject and his ability, almost playful, to use Sanskrit grammar to his peculiar ends, shines throughout his works.

Abhinava's *Gītārthasaṅgraha* has hitherto been little noticed. We have only one edition of the work, printed, or one might better say misprinted, in minute type as the last of seven commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā* edited by Wasudev Laxmana Sastri Pansikar just seventy years ago. This work was read at least by S. K. Belvalkar in preparing his edition of the 19th-century Ānandavardhana's commentary and by K. C. Pandeya in preparing his study of Abhinavagupta. Neither from these authors nor from elsewhere, however, can one learn much about the contents. No translation of the work has hitherto been made.

Now the *Gītārthasaṅgraha* is the only work of Abhinavagupta's on one of the *prasthāna-traya*, the triad of sacred texts that form the

basis of the Vedānta. One is naturally curious to see how he interprets it, how he could have brought its ancient doctrines into accord with his much later and apparently divergent views. So I was happy when Arvind Sharma, then a graduate student in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University, chose the *Gītārthasaṅgraha* as the subject for his doctoral thesis. That thesis consisted in the critical comments on the work, which the reader will find in what follows, plus a translation of the first six chapters. These chapters I read through at the time with considerable care. The remaining chapters, seven to eighteen, with which Dr. Sharma has now completed his translation, I have read over since, not with the critical eye of an examiner but with the interest of one attracted by the author and wishing well to the translator. From such acquaintance I may state briefly my opinion of the book which the reader now holds in his hands.

I may make an immediate criticism, for it is in good Indian tradition to put one's criticism first. The printed text of the *Gītārthasaṅgraha* is so corrupt that many passages are unintelligible without emendation. Dr. Sharma has improved many of these passages by the help of BORI ms. # 422 (1875-76). In others his ingenuity and common sense have made matters clear. But there remain a few passages, some of them apparently of importance, which must be left to future scholars to elucidate. As examples I might cite the remarks of *Gītā* 4.28, 4.29-32, 7.27, 15.15-19.

But does this defect outweigh the merits of what Dr. Sharma offers his readers? I think not. For the first time they can see in an evening's reading what Abhinava and his teacher Bhaṭṭendurāja found to be of importance in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Without Dr. Sharma's work the non-Sanskritist could discover none of this and even a good Sanskritist would have to spend hours in guessing at emendations or running about India in search of new manuscripts. The translation may be improved in the future if more manuscripts are forthcoming. Meanwhile much has been done.

What then is the *Gītārthasaṅgraha*? The title means "A Summary of the Meaning of the Gītā". The work is not properly speaking a commentary (*bhāṣya* or *vṛtti*). Many passages of the *Gītā*, and some of them the most important in the view of famous commentators, are left without any comment at all. Abhinava comments only on passages where he, or his teacher, saw a special significance that had been missed by others. But then, as if to compensate for this eclectic

procedure, he furnishes at the end of each chapter a brief verse summarizing the teaching that has just been given.

How many of these hidden meanings sprang from the mind of Abhinavagupta and how many from Bhaṭṭendurāja is difficult to say. In the sixth verse of his introduction Abhinava states that he received the tradition from the earlier scholar, who, incidentally, was also his teacher in poetics. Not only there but elsewhere in this work (e.g., on 8.7, 9.23-24) Abhinava gives the credit for his remarks to his teacher. Some of the distinctive views of the book, for example the kindly interpretation of the *Gītā*'s verse on the critical moment of death, were doubtless part of Bhaṭṭendurāja's teaching. But elsewhere Abhinava quotes from his own earlier works, from his *Devīstotravivṛti* (11.8), from a hymn to the Goddess (12.6-7), and from his *Laghu-prakriyā* (4.28, 12.11), a work written in a discipline that he had studied under other teachers. Then too, the stretching of Sanskrit grammar to add weight or give variety to a sacred text is so much in the manner of Abhinava's other works that one feels his own mind to be operating. I am not referring to what the western reader will consider an outrageous interpretation, like that of *kṣetrajña* (see the details at 13.2): such an interpretation is part of an esoteric doctrine and may have had a long history. I mean the interpretations for which there is no esoteric or doctrinal need. For example he takes *saṅgraheṇa* in *saṅgraheṇa pravakṣyāmi* (8.11 : "I will tell you briefly") in an etymological sense to mean I will show you by means of a correct determination (*samyag gṛhyate niścīyata iti saṅgrahaḥ*). The word *aniketaḥ* in 12.19 ("homeless, mendicant") he also takes etymologically and then expatiates: "one who is *aniketaḥ* has no thought that he must do this or that but enjoys whatever comes along of pleasure or pain, without consideration (*a-ketayā*), for his heart is set on God". I confess to a certain liking for such interpretations. They add variety to a text, much as a variation may add to the pleasure of a musical phrase. Abhinava was a master of the art of textual variation.

The chief "secret" of the *Gītā* in the Abhinava-Bhaṭṭendurāja interpretation is surely the doctrine of purification through the offering of sense-objects to the senses. The objects of the world were created by the desire of God (7.11), that is, through his *vimarṣa-śakti*. They are needed by the deities of the sense-organs (*indriya-devatāḥ*) just as the Vedic sacrifice is needed by the gods of heaven. To deny them what they need is more dangerous than to deny the gods of heaven, for the *indriyadevatās* are in our own bodies. As Abhinava explains

this doctrine, it is not a licence for unbridled sensuality, though I suspect that some Tantrics may have so taken it. It is essential in Abhinava's teaching, that one distinguish the sense-enjoyment from one's self. Karma is built up by self-aggrandisement, by successive attempts at acquisitions for the self. The yogi, on the other hand, engages in actions only as an activity of the senses. He does not force other creatures into constraint or favor for his own purposes (3.17). One is to meditate on the self as propertyless, as pure knowledge, just as in the teaching of Śaṅkara. The worldly life of a Tantric yogi, however, must have differed radically from that of a monk in the *Śaṅkara-sampradāya*. The Tantric refuses to restrain his senses from the objects that God makes available. In fact God, being a loving God, makes them available precisely so that the yogi may use up his *karma* by offering them to his senses. The offering has the effect of destroying the inherent misapprehension (*vāsanā*) of duality (*bheda*) (4.26).

This doctrine is first set forth in detail in commenting on the Gītā passage: *devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ* (3.11). It is developed throughout Book Three and is referred to again at 4.26, 5.7, and 13.2. In the smallest possible compass it is anticipated in the summary *śloka* of Book Two:

aho nu cetasas citrā gatir yogena yat kila
ārohayaty eva viṣayān āśrayaṃs tān parityajet.

"Ah, how marvellous is the way of the mind with yoga:
one brings upon it the objects of sense
and then by joining with them leaves them".

Another curious secret is imparted under 4.18 and referred to again at 6.29. Just as the adept who has disassociated himself from his acts is no longer answerable for them, just so he may omit doing any act and still receive the credit for it. By identifying himself with other agents, he worships if they worship, he gains merit if they gain merit. So there is no need to spend time in religious ritual. Somebody, somewhere in the world, is always praying to God. This notion goes back at least to the beginnings of the *pratyabhijñā* school. In support of it Abhinava quotes from Somānanda's *Pratyabhijñā-śāstra*, written a century or more before Abhinava's time. Again one is not to jump to the conclusion that our author means to legitimize a life of ease. In fact he grows eloquent against sloth in commenting on the word *pramāda* at *Gītā* 14.8, adding quotations from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to his own strictures. One gets the chance of being human only once in how many thousands of births and human life is the only spring-

board from which to reach *mokṣa*. What a crime it is then, what a pity, to waste it! And one has only to read Abhinava's own hymns to see how fervently he himself prayed to Śiva and to Devī.

A most attractive trait of Abhinava appears often in this book. I refer not to his philosophy or his critical acumen, but to his kindliness. It appears most strikingly perhaps in his comment on Book Eight, verses 5 through 7, which speak of the moment of death. Here a literal interpretation, especially of verse 6, can be terrifying: "Whatever object one remembers at the moment of death, know that one goes to that object in the next birth, transformed by one's mental conception of it". How can one take these words literally, Abhinava asks. At the moment of death the body may be so feeble that you cannot remember anything, or you may remember only the cup of cool water that your wife or your son brings you. What must be meant is that your future birth is governed by what was strongly present in your mind when it was healthy. Abhinava gives credit to his teacher for this interpretation, but he comes back to it at 14.15 as though it were specially important to him.

The same kindliness appears in his insistance at 9.32 that in this instance one *must* hold to the literal interpretation, which other commentators had denied, namely, that women and *śūdras* can win *mokṣa*. It appears in an incidental remark at 3.20 on the word *loka-saṅgraha*. He takes the word to mean "kindness to people" (*lokānugraha*) and then considers some further remark to be needed, perhaps because of the general disapproval of purposive action in the *Gītā*. It is true that one's action must be selfless, but "that kindness to others may be a proper motive for action", he says, "is shown by God's own example".

For a fuller characterization of the book and its author one must look to the translation and to the remarks of Dr. Sharma. I have said enough here for a preface, except to commend Dr. Sharma for his elucidation of a most refractory text. May his labor be rewarded by a renewed interest in one of India's greatest scholars.

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October, 1982

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FOREWORD

Authorship is like parentage; even when not dubious one is sometimes reluctant to acknowledge the end product. But sometimes one must, warts and all, when it constitutes a rite of passage by which one becomes a "twice-born" in the academia, when one's doctoral dissertation appears again as a book.

The book to which I am writing this foreword thus started as my doctoral dissertation. It then consisted of a translation of the first six chapters of Abhinavagupta's Commentary on the Bhagavadgītā and of an essay based on that Commentary. This book completes the translation. If it does not include a distinct discussion of the Tāntrika elements in Abhinavagupta's Commentary it is because that is the topic of a separate study currently under progress.

My doctoral work was supervised by Professor D. H. H. Ingalls to whom, like all his students, I remain grateful. But my personal sentiments extend further. I am specially grateful to him for insisting that before seeking embellishment I at least achieve precision; that while seeking literary felicity I at least achieve clarity and that in seeking originality I at least first achieve plausibility.

Much has been written on the Bhagavadgītā. Much is being written on the Bhagavadgītā. And much will perhaps be written on the Bhagavadgītā. Some of it may even be by me, until perhaps I realize that when one encounters a religious classic like the Bhagavadgītā it is the reader rather than the text which may be in need of illumination!

Philadelphia
June 18, 1982

Arvind Sharma

CHAPTER ONE

THE GĪTĀRTHASAṄGRAHA OF ABHINAVAGUPTA

Abhinavagupta[1] is a fairly well-known name in Indian studies.[2] On the basis of the reckoning called the Saptarṣi era,[3] "the earliest and the latest known works of Abhinava clearly show that the period of his literary activity extended over a quarter of a century"[4] from 990-1 - 1014-15 A.D.[5] Thus he may be assigned to "the second half of the 10th and the first quarter of the 11th century A.D."[6] During the period of his literary activity Abhinavagupta wrote no less than 48 works.[7] One of these is the Gītārthasaṅgraha.

Abhinavagupta's literary activity covers "three clearly marked periods."[8] Kanti Chandra Pandey calls them (1) the Tāntrika period, (2) the Ālaṅkārika period and (3) the Philosophical period.[9] In terms of this schema, the Gītārthasaṅgraha[10] of Abhinavagupta marks the transition from the Ālaṅkārika to the Philosophical period. The

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[1] This Abhinavagupta should not be confused with another Abhinavagupta mentioned in the Śaṅkara Digvijaya of Mādhava, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963), pp. 4-5.

[2] See Benjamin Walker, *Hindu World* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968), Vol. II, p. 221; A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1956), p. 335.

[3] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 9. For critical comments on this mode of reckoning see Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1964), Vol. I, pp. 389-394.

[4] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[5] *Ibid.* By the earliest and the latest known works is meant works whose dates are known. Thus Abhinavagupta's writing career could have commenced earlier and ended later.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

[10] Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Gītā is referred to by several names within the commentary itself such as Śrīmadbhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha [Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *Bhagavadgītā* (Bombay: Nirṇayasāgara Press, 1912), p. 181]; Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha (*ibid.*, p. 775); Gītārthasaṅgraha (*ibid.*, p. 6); Gītātātparyasaṅgraha (*ibid.*, 672); etc. Out of these the form Gītārthasaṅgraha will be regularly used in this dissertation.

Abhinavabhāratī, his celebrated commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra, was the last work of the Ālaṅkārika period,[11] but "while commenting on Bharata's Nāṭya Sūtra he had already begun writing side by side a purely philosophical work, namely, his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, as we know from a reference in Abhinava Bhāratī."[12] Thus the Gītārthasaṅgraha may be called the first work of the Philosophical period. When was it written?

Unfortunately, unlike some other works of Abhinavagupta, this work is not dated. Thus it is not possible to say, with any definiteness, when the Philosophical period commenced. But though one cannot be definite perhaps a reasonable inference can be drawn. The date of another work of his, the Pratayabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśiṇī, also known as Bṛhatī Vimarśiṇī, is known to be 1014-15 A.D.[13] We "know of only four philosophical works of Abhinava. ... The Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha is the first and the Pratyabhijñā Vimarśiṇī is the last. The Pratyabhijñā Vivṛti Vimarśiṇī immediately preceded the latter,"[14] and is "the penultimate of his known works."[15] Thus Abhinavagupta wrote four works during the Philosophical period and the penultimate work around 1014-15 A.D. On this basis, Kanti Chandra Pandey surmises that the "time of the writing of the Abhinava Bhāratī ... can safely be stated to be the beginning of the eleventh century A.D."[16] It has already been noticed that Abhinavagupta started writing the Gītārthasaṅgraha while he was commenting on the Nāṭya-śāstra. The composition of the Gītārthasaṅgraha may thus be placed at the beginning of the 11th century A.D.

The circumstances in which the Gītārthasaṅgraha was written

As already mentioned, Abhinavagupta started writing this work while working on the Abhinavabhāratī. It appears from two of the concluding verses[17] that "it was written at the repeated request of a certain pious Brāhmaṇa Loṭak(a), who, it appears, was Abhinava's relative."[18]

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[12] *Ibid.*, vide Abhinavabhāratī I, 337.
[13] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9, 42.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[16] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[17] Concluding verses 2 and 3, see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 775-6.
[18] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 60. There is, however, a slight difficulty associated with this statement. In the citation given by Kanti Chandra Pandey the

Bhaṭṭendurāja and the Gītārthasaṅgraha

Abhinavagupta refers in the introductory verses to one Bhaṭṭendurāja[19] as his teacher and it might be presumed that Abhinavagupta gives the interpretation as "learnt from his teacher Bhaṭṭendurāja"[20] though, of course, "not without using his own judgement,"[21] for he speaks of reflecting long on what he had learnt.[22] The influence of Bhaṭṭendurāja is further attested to in the Commentary in the gloss on Bhagavadgītā VIII.7 when he concludes with the remark that as "such is the view of the respected *guru* of Abhinavagupta, why say much more" (*śrīmadabhinavaguptagurūṇāṁ sammatam ity alaṁ bahunā*).[23] Elsewhere too Abhinavagupta openly acknowledges his debt to his *guru*. Thus in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.24 he remarks:

> ... This is the supreme secret revealed through this and following verses. It has been revealed to us, though of limited intelligence (to the best) of our understanding gained through the preceptor. We are not to be accused of perpetrating something fanciful, like a painting in the sky, without regard to the doctrine received through the main line of apostolic succession.[24]

Abhinavagupta had several teachers, as "he approached the best teachers of his time in different subjects for the traditional and the most authoritative information."[25] Out of these several teachers, Bhaṭṭendurāja was his teacher (1) in *dhvani* and (2) of the Bhagavadgītā. Abhinavagupta seems to have held him in high esteem as in the Dhvanyālokalocana he speaks of "*vidvatkavisahṛdayacakravartino Bhaṭṭendurājasya*"[26] and in the Gītārthasaṅgraha he refers to him

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key expression reads: *saddvijaloṭakakṛtacodanāvaśataḥ*. Other texts, however, substitute *sadvijalokakṛta* (vide Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 775) or *saddvijalokakṛta* (vide Manuscript No. 422 [1875-76], Government Manuscript Library, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona) for *saddvijaloṭakakṛta-*. However, the variants *sadvijaloka-* or *saddvijaloka-* for *saddvijaloṭaka-* lead to a metrically short terminal quarter of the *āryā*, the metre of the verse concerned.

[19] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[20] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *viviсya ca ciraṁ dhiyā*, Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 384-5.

[24] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 219.

[25] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[26] Abhinavagupta, *Dhyanyālokalocana* (Bombay: Nirṇayasāgara Press, 1928), p. 100, cited by Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

as the "son of Bhūtirāja," "by whom, the great-souled one, the whole world, which had fallen into darkness, was saved as by the sun."[27] This verse also provides the genealogy of Bhaṭṭendurāja as follows:

1. Kātyāyana
2. Sauśuka
3. Bhūtirāja
4. Bhaṭṭendurāja.[28]

The biological ancestry of Bhaṭṭendurāja as mentioned above, however, should be distinguished from the preceptorial, for "in fact, Bhaṭṭa Kallaṭa ... was a great grand teacher of Abhinava from the side of Bhaṭṭendurāja, who was Abhinava's teacher in the Bhagavadgītā."[29] The preceptorial line of Bhaṭṭendurāja and therefore of Abhinavagupta in this respect runs as follows:

1. Kallaṭa
2. Mukula
3. Bhaṭṭendurāja
4. Abhinavagupta.[30]

As a matter of fact, because Abhinavagupta wrote on both poetics and philosophy, he represents the convergence of "two different preceptorial lines" as represented by Lakṣmaṇagupta (*pratyabhijñā* philosophy) and Bhaṭṭendurāja (*dhvani* theory) thus:

1. Somānanda	1. Kallaṭa
2. Utpaladeva	2. Mukula
3. Lakṣmaṇagupta	3. Bhaṭṭendurāja
4. Abhinavagupta	4. Abhinavagupta.[31]

An interesting circumstance needs to be remarked on at this point: that Abhinavagupta received the *āmnāya*[32] of the Gītā through the preceptorial line of poetics rather than philosophy. However, it is the *spanda* branch of Kāśmīra Śaivism which seems to have had a

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[27] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 775.

[28] The verse refers to him as *śrībhūtirājasūnuḥ*, which should not be confounded with the appellation *bhūtirājatanaya* which Helārāja uses for himself in the colophons to Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīyam (vide Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 214).

[29] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

[31] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

[32] Kanti Chandra Pandey reads *āmnāya* and not *āmnāyam* in Introductory verse no. 6 to the Gītārthasaṅgraha (*op. cit.*, p. 745). However, both the Nirṇayasāgara edition and the Poona text contain the nominal accusative form *āmnāyam* and not the gerund *āmnāya* (see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstri Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 6).

tradition of commenting on the Gītā[33] rather than the *pratyabhijñā* branch, and Kallaṭa ties into the *spanda* branch.[34]

The size of Gītārthasaṅgraha

Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Gītā, the Gītārthasaṅgraha, is "one of the smallest existent."[35] Indeed "as its name implies, it is not a commentary in the strict sense of the word. At some places, however, it has the look of a commentary inasmuch as it gives the meanings of certain words."[36] The brevity of the commentary is probably to be explained in the light of Abhinavagupta's remark that the commentary aims at shedding light on the hidden import of the Gītā,[37] so he glosses those verses wherein the hidden import has to be brought to light and passes over the rest of the verses.[38] For instance, he clearly states in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.2 that as the concerned points have already been explained in detail by Bhāskara,[39] etc., he will desist from reiterating them, as he is

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[33] Vasugupta (9th cent. A.D.) of the *spanda* branch wrote a *vāsavi-ṭikā* on the Bhagavadgītā of which "no complete Ms. ... has so far been discovered" (Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 157). J. C. Chatterji believes that its "first six chapters are perhaps still to be found existing as incorporated in another Ṭīkā on the *Bha.* Gītā called Lāsakī, by Rājānaka Lasakāka of which Mss. are available" (*Kashmir Shaivism* [Srinagar: Kashmir State Research Department, 1914], p. 37). It is "the oldest Gītā commentary of Kashmir Saivism (though hardly the first Gītā commentary in Kashmir)." [F. Otto Schrader, "Ancient Gita Commentaries," *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 2 (June 1934), p. 354.] Similarly one Rāmakaṇtha wrote a commentary on the Gītā called *sarvatobhadra*, which has been published by Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series: No. 112. Can he be identified with a Rāma of the Spanda school? K. C. Chatterjee (*op. cit.*, p. 38) doubts this, and Kanti Chandra Pandey reports him as so doing without comment (*op. cit.*, p. 158) but see F. Otto Schrader (*op. cit.*, p. 354).

[34] See Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, pp. 154 and 157.

[35] F. Otto Schrader, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

[36] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[37] Introductory verse no. 5, see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[38] Abhinavagupta also "passes over many words of the text in silence" [S. K. Belvalkar, The so-called Kashmir recension of the Bhagavadgita, *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (July 1939), p. 215].

[39] Which Bhāskara is Abhinavagupta referring to? "Now there is a Bhāskara of the Śaiva school who is a Kashmirian predecessor of Abhinavagupta. There is another Bhāskara of the Bhedābheda school, and a very early opponent of Śaṅkarācārya. The commentary of a Bhāskara is mentioned in the *Tātparyacandrikā* on Rāmānuja's *Gītā-bhāṣya* at iii.42, xiii.3, and xviii.66." S. K. Belvalkar goes on to show that the commentator Jayatīrtha mentions the fact that a Bhāskara deliberately emended the reading *paramātmā samāhitaḥ* (Bhagavadgītā VI.7b) to *parātmasu samā matiḥ*, that "Jayatīrtha is probably referring" to the Bhāskara of the Bhedābheda school (and

determined to hold to his resolve of explaining only the *gūḍhārtha* (*kim asmākaṁ tadgūḍhārthapratijñāmātranirvāhaṇasārāṇāṁ punarukta-pradarśanaprayāsena*).[40]

It should be noted though, that if Abhinavagupta's Gītārthasaṅgraha appears rather meagre when compared to the other *bhāṣyas* on the Gītā, it is considerably larger than some other *saṅgrahas*, as for instance that of Yāmuna, which consists of 32 *ślokas*.[41]

The text of the Gītā used by Abhinavagupta

The text of the Gītā used by Abhinavagupta was what has since come to be called the Kāśmīra recension.[42] This becomes clear from the fact that he cites several additional verses which are not found either in the vulgate or the Critical Edition of the Bhagavadgītā but are found in the Kāśmīra recension.[43] There are, however, several versions of the Kāśmīra recension.[44] Most versions are in Śāradā script but Devanāgarī transcripts of the Śāradā texts, and a Bengali one as well, are also available. A description of the various manuscripts of the Kāśmīra recension follows:

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not the one of Kāśmīra) and that as "Abhinava based his commentary on Bhāskara" as shown by his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.2, he would "in the normal course of things, accept the latter's textual emendation" (*op. cit.*, p. 224), which he does (see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, *op. cit.*, p. 292). For more on Bhāskara of the *bhedābheda* school see D. H. H. Ingalls, "Bhāskara the Vedantin," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. XVII (1967), pp. 61-67.

[40] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 676.

[41] J. A. B. van Buitenen, *Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā*, ('s-Gravenhage : H. L. Smiths), p. 9, Appendix. Yāmuna's work, which is "a very concise summary of the G. in 32 slokas" (*ibid.*, p. 9) bears a title identical with that of Abhinavagupta's work, as used in this dissertation. For the Sanskrit text of Yāmuna's work see Mahāvanaśāstrī, ed., *Śrimadbhagavadgītā* (Bombay: Lakṣmivenkaṭeśvara Press, *saṁvat* 1959), pp. 1-3.

[42] See F. Otto Schrader, *The Kashmir Recension of the Bhagavadgītā*, Stuttgart, 1930.

[43] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 108, 175 etc.; also see V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *The Mahābhārata* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1947), pp. 123, 129 etc.

[44] S. K. Belvalkar, *op. cit.*, p. 214. "A 'Version' should mainly embody modifications happening during the course of scribal transmission from a common codex; and as, ordinarily, the transcripts are in the same script as the original — except in biscriptal border-regions — a 'Version' tends to be Provincial. A 'Recension' should connote more deliberate and far-reaching alterations in the text, often changing its tone and emphasis. Such a 'Recension' transcends the limits of a Script or a Province. This difference between the two terms is often ignored" (*ibid.*, fn. 1).

I — Śāradā version [Ś]
Ś1 — Calcutta, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, No. 3312 (4065); dated Laukika Saṁvat 85 (ca. A.D. 1739).
Ś2 — London, British Museum, Oriental MS. No. 6763 D.[45]
Ś3 — The Śāradā Ms. used by Pandit Lakshman Raina of Srinagar for his edition, published in 1933, which represents the text underlying the commentary of Abhinavagupta (Cg).
Ś4 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 424 of 1875-76, representing the text underlying the commentary of Rājānaka Rāmakaṇṭha alias Rāmakavi (Ck).
Ś5 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 423 of 1875-76, representing CK.
Ś6 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 179 of 1883-84, representing the text underlying the commentary of Ānandavardhana (Cā).
II — Kasmiri version [K] being a transcript from Ś in Devanāgarī.
K0 — Poona, Mirikar Collection of the Bhārat Ithihās Sanshodhaka Mandal, No. 207.
K1 — London, India Office Library, No. 326 (2137); dated V. Saṁvat 1839 (ca. A.D. 1783).
K2 — Poona, B.O.R. Institute's Mahābhārata Collection, No. 15 (245); dated Śaka 1693 = V. Saṁvat 1828 (A.D. 1771).
K3 — Poona, Bombay Govt. Collection (deposited at the BORI), No. 565 of 1882-1883; dated Śaka 1616 (A.D. 1694).
K5 — Poona, No. 23, Kamat Collection of the BORI; dated Saṁvat 1742 (ca. A.D. 1686).
K6 — Gondal, Kathiawad, ms. (without number) belonging to the Rasaśālā; dated V. Saṁvat 1545 (ca. A.D. 1489).
III — Kaśmīrī version [K] being a transcript from Ś in Bengali.
K4 — Dacca, University Library, No. 669; dated Śaka(?) 1675.[46]

Out of these thirteen Mss. Ś3 represents the text used by Abhinavagupta, as is clear from the note which accompanies it.

The purpose for which the Gītārthasaṅgraha was written

Apart from the friendly persuasions that may have led him to write it, Abhinavagupta also offers some intellectual justification for writing the Gītārthasaṅgraha. He was as conscious in the eleventh century as some writers are in the twentieth,[47] that the Gītā has

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[45] "The variants from this ms. are quoted by F. Otto Schrader in his *The Kashmir Recension of the Bhagavadgītā* ..." (V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. LVI).

[46] The data presented here have been consolidated from *ibid.*, pp. ix, x, xiii and xiv.

[47] "During the last war we used to see notices everywhere asking if our journey was really necessary. In conscience we had often to admit that it was not. Today

Śaṅkara explains this verse as follows:

> Never did I not exist; rather, I always did exist, that is, through the past bodily births and deaths, I always existed just as the air is permanent within [a series of] jars, that is the intention. So also, never did you not exist; rather, you always did exist. So, never did these rulers of men not exist; rather, they always did exist. So neither shall we cease to exist; rather, we shall all certainly continue to exist even in the future after the destruction of these bodies. As the Self, the Ātman, we are eternal through all three periods of time (past, present and future). That is the meaning.
> The plural is as used with reference to the bodies that are different; it does not mean that there is more than one Self.
> (Question): — Now, how is the Self eternal?
> (Answer): — Here follows an illustration:
> And then Śaṅkara proceeds to gloss the next verse.

Śaṅkara's explanation may now be compared with the following offered by Abhinavagupta:

> Two points are made; one by the verse (beginning with) *na hy evāham* and the other by the verse (beginning with) *dehino 'smin*. [First, to take the verse beginning with] *na hy evāham*: For I never was not; rather, I was. And so were these kings. [Now to take the verse beginning with] *dehino 'smin*: If (mere) change of form is a subject of grief, then why is the attainment of youth after childhood not grieved for? He who is steadfast (brave), does not grieve. If there is fortitude and, moreover, one does not care for the physical body, then it is easy [to avoid grief]. Therefore, seek to be steadfast.[54]

How is Abhinavagupta's gloss different from Śaṅkara's?

At first sight the difference does not seem to be marked. Both of them have connected this verse with the succeeding one, though Abhinavagupta does so more than Śaṅkara. A closer analysis suggests that while Śaṅkara takes the eternality[55] of the *ātman* here in the sense of *pravāharūpanityatā*, as the *jīvātman* going through various lives, it is not clear in what way Abhinavagupta takes the eternality involved, as *pravāharūpa* or as *kūṭastha*. Hence a comparison here is hard to institute. Moreover, Abhinavagupta does not have much to say on this verse; he has more to say about the next. It is difficult

[54] This is the reading of the Kāśmīrī recension which Abhinavagupta used (see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 46), as against Śaṅkara's text which read *na tv evāham* (Śaṅkara, *Gītābhāṣya* [Śrīraṅgam: Śrīvanivilāsa-mudrāyantrālaya], p. 19).

[55] K. Satchidananda Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 40.

explanations: (1) since the sage really 'sees' *māyā* for what it is, isn't it strange that there should be *night* when he *sees through* the veil of *māyā*; and (2) the Yogin stays awake in knowledge wherein others are confused, are in the dark, and does not stay up in the ignorance enveloped by which ordinary people are up and about: this contrast is surprising.

The second explanation is common to Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta but Abhinavagupta sees in it an element of wonder (*ity api citram*).[60] The first explanation is offered by Abhinavagupta on his own.

There is also one important metaphysical difference between Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta in relation to *māyā*. For Śaṅkara, *māyā* is wholly bad inasmuch as it refracts the unity of Brahman and causes the plurality of the world to appear.[61] Abhinavagupta, however, distinguishes between two kinds of *māyā*. There is the ordinary man "who comes under the influence of Maya, he as it were falls asleep ... the universal 'All-this' is obscured."[62] This is the *āvaraṇa* aspect of *māyā* to which Śaṅkara also refers.[63] But Abhinavagupta points out that under the influence of this *māyā* the ordinary man overlooks the primeval form (*prācyaṁ rūpam*)[64] of *māyā* when it is "but an aspect of Divine Shakti."[65] This is clearly suggestive of the distinction in South Indian Śaivism between *śuddha-māyā*[66] and *aśuddha-māyā* and in Kāśmīra Śaivism[67] between *śakti* and *māyā*.[68]

It is clear, therefore, that Abhinavagupta does offer some fresh insights here, both on his own and in the light of Kāśmīra Śaivism.

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[60] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[61] See Eliot Deutsch and J. A. B. van Buitenen, *A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1971), pp. 308-9.

[62] J. C. Chatterji, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[63] See Śaṅkara on Bhagavadgītā VII.25; Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.5; 3.12; Iśa Upaniṣad 3; etc.

[64] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[65] J. C. Chatterji, *op. cit.*, p. 76. It could, however, also be a reference to *sadvidyā*, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

[66] T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism* (Bombay: Chetana Ltd., 1971), p. 169.

[67] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, pp. 364, 370.

[68] By contrast, Rāmānuja makes an analogous presentation but connects it not with *māyā* but *buddhi*. "A person who has subdued his senses and purified his mind, contemplates the ātman by means of the buddhi that is concerned with the ātman. This buddhi is dark as night to other people, but to him the second buddhi — the one concerned with objects — is as dark as night" (J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 65).

Bhagavadgītā III.11

With this prosper ye the gods,
And let the gods prosper you;
(Thus) prospering one the other,
Ye shall attain the highest welfare.[69]

Śaṅkara has little to say by way of explanation on this verse:

"By this sacrifice ye nourish the gods such as Indra. The Gods shall nourish you, with rain, etc." 'The supreme good' is the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman in due course. Or, the 'supreme good' may mean 'svarga.'[70]

Abhinavagupta offers an esoteric[71] allegorical[72] explanation of this verse. He takes the 'gods' to be the playful disposition of the senses, which rule over the senses; 'making the gods prosper' he takes to mean partaking of the objects of the senses; 'the gods will make you prosper' he takes to mean that the senses being satiated will produce states of bliss consistent with themselves on account of their being present in one's self. And the highest welfare he regards as the attainment of Brahman, which follows after one has gone through the states of *samādhi*, characterized by the satiation of the senses and their absorption in the self.

In this case Abhinavagupta's interpretation does turn out to be original and esoteric.

Bhagavadgītā IV.18

Who sees inaction in action,
And action in inaction,
He is enlightened among men;
He does all actions, disciplined.[73]

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[69] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[70] A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99. Rāmānuja says a little more by way of explanation, emphasizing the fact that sacrificing to these gods is really sacrificing to Viṣṇu (Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49).

[71] Abhinavagupta refers to *rahasyaśāstra*, Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 150.

[72] Abhinavagupta seems to have a certain penchant for noticing and offering allegorical explanations. He offers one here. In his gloss on Bhagavadgītā I.1 he notices how some people (*kecit*) have offered an allegorical explanation and cites it (see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 10).

[73] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

Śaṅkara offers an extended gloss on this passage in the course of which he anticipates and answers objections, remarks on the cussedness of people "who have long been subject to great misconceptions" and who "are deluded often and often,"[74] and rejects the explanation of this verse offered in *karmamīmāṁsā*. The crux of his position he states at the very outset:

> Actions mean that which is done, an act in general. Inaction can be seen in action and action in inaction, since both inaction (nivṛitti) and action (pravṛitti) presuppose an agent. In fact, all experience of such things as action and agent is possible only in a state of avidyā, only when we have not yet attained to the real (vastu). He who sees inaction in action and who sees action in inaction — he is wise among men, he is devout (yukta, yogin), he has done all action. — Thus is he extolled who sees action in inaction and vice versa.[75]

Abhinavagupta's explanation of this verse proceeds along quite different lines. His explanation of seeing inaction in action is that because the doer does not possess the sense of acting as an agent, even though he ostensibly acts, he really does not act because he is devoid of the sense of being the agent. This explanation is not that surprising and is in keeping with other verses in the Gītā. It is in explaining how in inaction one may see action that Abhinavagupta provides his own interpretive twist. For him *akarma* = non-ritual action = *pūjā* (as distinct from *karma* or sacrificial ritual). Thus in *akarma* or *pūjā* performed by *others* he sees his own action, i.e., he identifies himself with the performance of the *pūjā*. So in his case the *karmic* doubt arises: by which *karma* is to be recompensed? His own? But he has no sense of agency. Those of others? But they are actions of others not his own. In other words, the true *yogin* either performs *all* actions or *none* at all, "this is the supreme secret."[76]

It may now be asked, how come the *yogin* can see his own action in another's actions? Abhinavagupta suggests that such a question

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[74] A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 129. Rāmānuja seems to take a somewhat different view of this verse. "Karmayoga has the form of knowledge because it involves the knowledge that the ātman is distinct from the body. When a man perceives that acts, when they are performed, have the form of knowledge because they are realizations what the ātman really is (sic), and when he perceives that this knowledge has the form of action, because it is implied in action, then he knows the purpose of the śāstras and is capable of release, for by every act which he performs he seeks to realize this purpose of the śāstras" (J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 81).

[76] *ity upaniṣat* (Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 202).

about a man of knowledge is misplaced because the possession of knowledge which is perfect and unshaken interpenetrates in many ways the entire class constituted by *objects* and *subjects* of knowledge. Just as one can come to 'know' both a jar as well as a piece of cloth, so should one understand the interconnection between different subjects.[77]

Bhagavadgītā IV.24

> The (sacrificial) presentation is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation;
> In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman it is poured by Brahman;
> Just to Brahman must he go,
> Being concentrated upon the (sacrificial) action that is Brahman.[78]

Śaṅkara glosses this verse fairly extensively in the light of *jñānayoga* and also states and criticizes a more ritualistic interpretation of the verse. His main point, however, is made early in the gloss and runs as follows:

> The man who has realized the Brahman sees that the instrument by which the oblation is poured in the fire is nothing but Brahman: that it has no existence apart from that of the Self, just as silver has no existence apart from that of the mother-of-pearl (mistaken for silver). What (in the illustration) appears as silver is nothing but the mother-of-pearl. What people look upon as the instrument of offering is to one who has realized Brahman, nothing but Brahman. Brahman is the oblation: i.e., what is regarded as oblation is to him nothing but Brahman; and it is by Brahman that the offering is made, i.e., the agent is none other than the Brahman. The act of offering is nothing but Brahman; and the result, the goal to be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action is nothing but Brahman.[79]

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[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-208.

[78] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[79] A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 141. Rāmānuja's gloss on this verse is problematical. "The entire act consists of Brahman because it is of Brahman's nature: the sacrifice is Brahman, the utensils are Brahman, the fire in which the sacrifice is offered is Brahman, and the sacrificer himself is Brahman. He who contemplates this insight, contemplates the act-as-Brahman. Such a one is capable of knowing the proper form of the ātman—which is Brahman—through his acts, because his acts are of Brahman's nature. In other words, the acts performed by an aspirant have the form of knowledge because they imply the realization that they consist of Brahman and are therefore themselves a means of contemplating the ātman without the inter-

Abhinavagupta's gloss on this verse is fairly comprehensive. He mentions four explanations two of which are esoteric. One of the two esoteric ones Abhinavagupta identifies as having been received by him through his Guru. The explanations are distinct but not completely apart and are presented below.

(1) In the first interpretation, everything is identified with Brahman. The offering proceeds from Brahman, goes to Brahman, is offered in the fire of Brahman and is calculated to make that fire blaze forth all the more. Such a holistic and cosmic Brahman is to be known, for there exists nothing else besides, by the *yogin* whose *samādhi* consists of that act of offering.[80]

(2) The second explanation preserves more ritualistic elements. The sacrifice is said to be pervaded by Brahman because the gods to whom the sacrifices are offered represent the nature of Brahman. Thus as a result of the sacrifice no fruit of sacrifice is gained by the sacrificer, rather Brahman itself is gained.[81]

(3) The third explanation, which Abhinavagupta cites as having been received by him from his Guru, makes the point that people with a limited outlook, for whom the sacrifice consists of ritual action alone, receive fruits in accordance with that belief. How could those, who know the nature of the sacrifice to be unlimited and perfect, as identical with Brahman, become addicted to the small petty fruits which proceed from a limited conception of sacrifice.[82]

(4) According to the fourth explanation, which Abhinavagupta cites as an esoteric one received in that sect through uninterrupted succession, the specific mention of fire, sacrificial offerings and instruments of sacrifice such as ladle etc., and of specific ritual acts, is to be disregarded. These constitute, so to say, the "letter" of the verse and should be overlooked in favour of the "spirit" of the verse.[83]

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cession of *jnānayoga*" (J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 82). The passage starts out lucidly but tends to become somewhat opaque towards the end. J. A. B. van Buitenen notes that "this passage is not clear: on the one hand *brahman* is equated with the Supreme person (*karmaṇaḥ parabrahmabhūta-paramapuruṣātmakatva* ...), on the other with the ātman (*brahmabhūtam ātmasvarūpam*); moreover the realization that the acts "consist of" God is called a "means of directly contemplating the atman"; it seems that R interprets br. = Supreme Person in 24a, b and d, and = ātman in 24c; only if so twisted the passage makes some sense" (*ibid.*, fn. 188).

[80] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Sāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 216-217.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

For the self is the self's only friend,
And the self is the self's only enemy.
The self is a friend to that self
By which self the very self is subdued;
But to him that does not possess the self, in enmity
Will abide his very self, like an enemy.
Of the self-imbued pacified mind,
The supreme self remains concentrated (in absorption),
In cold and heat, pleasure and pain,
Likewise in honour and disgrace.[88]

Śaṅkara in his gloss takes the word *ātman*, translated above as the self, a word which repeatedly occurs in the first two verses cited above, as referring to the *ātman* itself except where the text speaks of the *ātman* being subdued by the *ātman* (*Bhagavadgītā* VI.6b) when he comments *jitendriya ity artaḥ*,[89] thus taking the subjugation of the self by the self to indicate subjugation of the senses.

Abhinavagupta, however, takes a different tack. He glosses *ātman* as the mind, *mana eva ity artaḥ*.[90] In the present context this appears to be a very helpful suggestion. Rāmānuja too glosses *ātman* as *manas*.[91]

It is clear, then, from an examination of these cases that Abhinavagupta does indeed offer esoteric interpretations of the Gītā on occasion, as well as helpful suggestions. His glosses, almost always, are of interest and are sometimes distinguished not only by esoteric novelty but also genuine originality.

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[88] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[89] Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.
[90] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 291.
[91] Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

In Section IV exegetical aspects will be identified wherein Rāmakavi and Ānanda are in agreement but Abhinavagupta holds a different view.

In Section V an exegetical aspect will be identified wherein Abhinavagupta and Ānanda hold a similar position but Rāmakavi assumes a somewhat different stance.

I

All the three commentaries under consideration share two remarkable features: all of them use the Kāśmīra recension[8] of the Gītā[9] and all of them are Śaiva commentaries from Kāśmīra. These two considerations are not entirely unconnected.

> Not all the two hundred and more alleged Kashmirian pāṭhabhedas are exclusively Kashmirian. Quite a few are current outside Kashmir, and a few others are rejected by some of the Kashmirian writers and commentators themselves. But there is a sufficient body of Pāṭhabhedas that are found in Kashmirian Mss. of the text, and of the Kashmirian commentaries on the text which have helped to preserve the pāṭhas intact. This was so because there was a distinct Kashmirian script, but particularly because the Kashmirian writers and the commentators were the followers of a distinctive religious sect. When the head of a religious sect — say Vasugupta — writes his own commentary on an important text like the Gītā, his recension underlying the original commentary comes to be accepted unquestioned by almost all the subsequent writers; and so the recension comes to be perpetuated during the dominance of the sect in question. ... Hence it is legitimate to speak of a Kashmirian recension of the Bhagavadgītā, as it is legitimate, in a smaller measure, to speak of a Rāmānujīya recension of the Poem.[10]

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[8] For a comparative presentation of the Kāśmīra, Vulgate and Śaṅkara's text of the Gītā see Shripad Krishna Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, Appendix 2.

[9] It may be pointed out, however, that though all the three commentators use the same recension, they do not use the same version. Abhinavagupta uses S3, Rāmakavi uses S4 and Ānanda uses S6. For a comparative annotation on the different versions see *ibid.*, footnotes *passim*.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26. Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara (*op. cit.*, p. 4), supplies the interesting information that Venkaṭācārya (alias Vedāntadeśikan) in his Tātparyacandrikā on Rāmānuja's *gītābhāṣya* cites certain verses said to have been glossed by Yādavaprakāśa in his comments on Bhagavadgītā XI.26, 27, which are peculiar to the Kāśmīra recension. Venkaṭācārya (1268-1369 A.D.) comments: *ete ślokāḥ santi na veti devo jānāti*; which seems to indicate two things: (1) that the Kāśmīra recension was known beyond Kāśmīra and (2) that by Venkaṭācārya's time, if not earlier, it had virtually disappeared in the Tamil country.

Not only are all the commentators Śaiva, commenting on more or less the same text, they also share a further remarkable circumstance. As Śaiva commentators they are not bothered in the least by the fact that the text they are commenting on is a Vaiṣṇavite text.[11] This remains a somewhat puzzling fact till it is realized that Abhinavagupta

> traces the origin of the Śaivāgama from Bhairava ... (he) represents Rāmacandra to have studied it partly. In the Harivaṁśa Purāṇa we are told that Kṛṣṇa has taught the sixty-four monistic Śaivāgamas by sage Durvāsas, the revealer of all of them in the Kali age. Similarly in the Mahābhārata, Mokṣa Parva, it is stated that he got instruction in the Dvaita and Dvaitādvaita Śaivāgamas, twenty-eight in number, from Upamanyu. It seems that it was because of the above statements that Kṛṣṇa was thought by the Śaivas to have been himself a follower of Trika. Perhaps for this very reason the Bhagavadgītā is classed with the Āgamas.[12]

The acceptance of Kṛṣṇa as an authority on Śaivism by the Śaiva tradition of Kāśmīra probably accounts for the lack of any self-consciousness whatsoever on the part of the commentators that, although Śaiva themselves, they are commenting on a Vaiṣṇava work.

II

Next an exegetical aspect of the Gītā may be identified wherein all the three Śaiva commentators Rāmakavi, Abhinavagupta and Ānanda seem to differ.

Such an example seems to be provided by their respective glosses on Bhagavadgītā VIII.6. The verse may be translated thus:

> Whatsoever state (of being) meditating upon
> He leaves the body at death,
> To just that he goes, son of Kuntī,
> Always, being made to be in the condition of that.[13]

This verse enshrines the well-known Hindu belief that the thoughts or emotions one entertains at the time of one's death determine the next birth. This idea is, in a general sense, accepted by all the three commentators but is elaborated by each in his own way.

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[11] The same could be said of Śaṅkara if he is taken to be a Śaivite (see Ainslee T. Embree, ed., *The Hindu Tradition* [New York: Vintage Books, 1972], p. 234) but this is by no means certain, see Paul Hacker, Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, Band IX (1965), pp. 147-154.

[12] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

[13] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

Rāmakavi connects this verse with the notion of the three *guṇas*. He states that whatever thing a person remembers at the time of death, be it *sāttvika*, *rājasa* or *tāmasa*, or with whatever mental attitude a person yields up his body, *sāttvika*, *rājasa* or *tāmasa*, he obtains a similar rebirth. He also connects this verse with some later verses of the Gītā, namely Bhagavadgītā XIV.14.15; and cites them in the body of his gloss:

yadā sattve vivṛddhe[14] tu pralayaṁ yāti dehabhṛt
tadottamavidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate //
rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karmasaṅgiṣu jāyate
tathā pralīnas tamasi mūḍhayoniṣu jāyate[15] //

Abhinavagupta adopts a slightly different approach. He does not connect this verse with the three *guṇas* or with later verses in the Bhagavadgītā itself. He writes:

> Not only indeed does one come to Me — the vanquisher of all ailments (thinking of me) at the time of death when one is in good health, but (the Lord) also preaches the way whereby God may be remembered by one even in bad health, who has withdrawn himself from all the activities of the senses. He from whose heart the divine truth is never lost even in the course of all worldly dealings, who has cast off all actions on the Lord and who is ever suffused with God, definitely automatically remembers the divine truth — for the reason that he is always steeped in it. Therefore it is said that whatever thing the innermost self is filled with, that is remembered at the time of death and that state is attained; therefore at all times be devoted to me, be desirous of me, this is the import, and not this that whatever is (literally) remembered at the time of death (i.e., whatever thought happens to cross the mind) that forsooth is obtained. If this be so then the prospect is indeed bleak (*tāmasa*) for the *jñānin* whose mind is disturbed by the disorder of bodily humours and who is comatose (when he dies)...[16]

The fact that at the exact moment of death one may, because of one's physical condition, not be able to remember God literally, is also considered by Ānanda. His resolution, however, of this difficulty

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[14] The Critical Edition, as well as Śaṅkara, read *pravṛddhe* (vide V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 171).

[15] Śrinivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 136.

[16] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 381-383. By contrast, on this point Rāmakavi argues that if one is always fixed in one *guṇa*, say *sāttvika*, then under the influence of this *saṁskāra* his remembrance is bound to have that quality at the time of death (Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 136). Abhinavagupta seems to be arguing, however, that God needn't be literally remembered at the moment of death if one's being is steeped in Him.

is quite different from Abhinavagupta's. He resolves it not in terms of man's devotion to God but God's love for man. He writes: *antakāle kāṣṭhapāṣāṇatulyāṁś caitanyavigamān matsmaraṇāsamarthān aham eva tān smarāmi svasāyujyam nayāmīty arthaḥ.*[17] Thus if he, on account of being unconscious does not remember God, God remembers him and unites him with Himself.

It is clear, therefore, that in their treatment of the last few moments in relation to rebirth or the next life the three commentators follow different courses. According to Rāmakavi what one has devoted one's life to one is bound to remember in one's last moments. Not necessarily, Abhinavagupta would add, for one may be unconscious at the time of one's death, but it makes no difference. The verse should not be taken literally. It makes no difference, agrees Ānanda, but for a different reason: God himself remembers the devotee if the devotee can't remember Him because of his physical condition.

III

The three commentators, however, do not indeed differ all the time. Sometimes two of them agree but one of them differs. Thus, for instance, Ānanda is unique among the three in dividing the Bhagavadgītā into three parts of six chapters each: *prathame' dhyāyaṣaṭke uddeśaḥ madhyame lakṣaṇam antye parīkṣeti triparveyaṁ gītā.*[18] Abhinavagupta and Rāmakavi do not seem to use such a classificatory schema. But more significantly perhaps, Ānanda differs in another respect from Rāmakavi and Abhinavagupta. He attaches far greater emphasis to Yoga not in the general sense of uniting with God but in the specific sense in which it is developed by Patañjali, and more than that, by a commentator on Patañjali. It is this "disproportionate emphasis" laid on "yoga in its more mystic and weird aspects and practices" which "accounts for the several wholesale quotations from the Yogasūtras and from the Vyāsabhāṣya thereon, which takes up pages after pages of the Ānandavardhinī."[19]

A striking illustration of this approach of Ānanda's is provided by his gloss on Bhagavadgītā V.18. The verse translates as follows:

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[17] S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 143.

[18] S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4. There are precedents to this in the Viśiṣṭādvaitic tradition of interpreting the Gītā. A similar threefold classification is attributed to Yāmuna and is also found in Rāmānuja (see J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 99, 137).

[19] S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 11.

In a knowledge-and-cultivation-perfected
Brahman, a cow, an elephant,
And in a mere dog, and an outcast,
The wise see the same thing.[20]

S. K. Belvalkar comments thus on Ānanda's gloss[21] on this verse:

> The commentator tells us that if an individual has in the present and previous lives acquired sufficient perfection in Yogic practices of the type detailed in the Third Pāda of the Pātañjala Yogasūtra, it is possible for him to simultaneously assume a number of bodies, and through each of these bodies to hasten the process of living out the ensuants of his past accumulated karmans. The mumukṣu or the yogin endeavouring thus to hasten the process of achieving the *summum bonum* does not bother himself as to what body he chooses to animate — whether it is that of a pious Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dogeater — provided it helps him to live out the ensuants of his past karmans.[22]

This interpretation appears far-fetched and is unique to Ānanda. Both Rāmakavi and Abhinavagupta impute no such interpretation to the verse in question.[23]

IV

In the previous section an instance of exegetical convergence between Rāmakavi and Abhinavagupta but divergence from them on the part of Ānanda was identified. In this section a couple of instances in which Rāmakavi and Ānanda take a similar position but Abhinavagupta takes a different one may be examined.

Rāmakavi and Ānanda are in basic agreement about the general thrust of the Gītā. According to both of them the Gītā teaches *jñānakarmasamuccaya*. In his introductory comments in Sanskrit to the *ṭīkā* of Rāmakavi, S. N. Tadpatrikar remarks that the author seems to have adopted (*aṅgīkṛtam*) the view that the Gītā espouses *jñānakarmasamuccaya*.[24] This is clear from Rāmakavi's gloss on Bha-

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[20] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[21] S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[23] See Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 98; Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 265-268.

[24] Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 5. F. Otto Schrader concurs: "Mr. Tadpatrikar rightly observes that his commentary gives the impression of his having been a *jñānakarmasamuccya-vādin*; and this would indeed also account for Abhinavagupta's silence" (*op. cit.*, p. 354).

gavadgītā III.3.[25] Similarly, in his introductory comments to the *ṭīkā* of Ānanda, S.K. Belvalkar points out that the author "intended to set forth and establish the doctrine of Jñānakarmasamuccaya, metaphysically grounding it on the Śaiva Tantricism as current in Kashmir from the days of Abhinavagupta onwards."[26] This becomes clear from Ānanda's remarks in his *upodghāta*[27] to the commentary proper, as well as from the colophon to the commentary on Chapter IV which indicates that the commentary could be called one of *jñānakarmasamuccaya*.[28] Indeed, from this point of view the "real service" of Ānanda "consists in his having diligently collected together, from the Mārkaṇḍeya, Viṣṇu and other Purāṇas, and from the Mahābhārata itself, passages supporting the Jñānakarmasamuccaya view."[29]

Thus both Rāmakavi and Ānanda are in agreement on this point; but Abhinavagupta in the gloss on the very first verse of the Gītā criticises the *jñānakarmasamuccaya* interpretation of the Gītā and upholds the view that it stands for *jñāna* alone.[30]

Not only does Abhinavagupta differ from both Rāmakavi and Ānanda in the general interpretation of the Gītā, sometimes he differs from their common understanding of certain key expressions in a verse of the Gītā. An instance of this is provided by Bhagavadgītā III.42 which runs:

indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ.

A key issue with this passage is: what does the *saḥ* stand for here? Both Rāmakavi[31] and Ānanda[32] gloss it as *ahaṅkāra*, but Abhinavagupta glosses it as *ātmā*.[33]

V

Finally, an instance of convergence on the part of Abhinavagupta

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[25] Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 48.

[26] S.K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 9, etc.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[29] S.K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[30] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 8. Abhinavagupta's doctrine of *jñāna*, however, needs to be distinguished from that of Śaṅkara, as will be pointed out later.

[31] Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[32] S.K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[33] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 179.

and Ānanda and divergence on the part of Rāmakavi may also be considered.

Such an instance is provided by the treatment of the concept of two classes of beings, the *daiva* and the *āsura*, which is developed in the Bhagavadgītā in the Sixteenth Chapter. The classification is clearly stated in Bhagavadgītā XVI.6, which may be translated as follows:

> There are two creations of beings in this world,
> The divine and the demoniac.
> The divine has been explained at length;
> Hear from Me of the demoniac, son of Pṛthā.[34]

Both Abhinavagupta[35] and Ānanda[36] gloss the verse in a rather straightforward manner. Indeed, they barely gloss it, but for Rāmakavi this classification possesses a key significance. He refers to this classification in his *upodghāta*[37] and again on his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.7-8. These are the famous *avatāra* verses of the Gītā:

> vadā vadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
> abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham[38]
> paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
> dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge.

Rāmakavi connects Kṛṣṇa's statement that he comes into being to protect the good (*paritrāṇāya sādhūnām*)[39] and to destroy the wicked (*vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*)[40] with the two classes of beings; the *daiva* and the *āsura*. He connects the former with the good (*sādhu*) and the latter with the wicked (*duṣkṛt*).[41] Not only that, according to Rāmakavi each class consists of two kinds of beings. The *daiva* class consists of (1) the gods (*devas*) and (2) human beings. The category of the *devas* also consists of two sub-categories: (i) established gods like Indra etc., and (ii) those human beings who have become gods (temporarily) by winning a sojourn in heaven because of their good deeds. Both are distinguished by the predominance of *sattva*. The

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[34] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
[35] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 638-639.
[36] S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 239.
[37] Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[38] The reading in the Kāśmīra recension is *tadātmāṁśam*, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op.-cit.*, p. 61.
[39] S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Tāḍapatrīkara, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 72.

category of *manuṣyas* or human beings also consists of two sub-categories: (i) human beings in whom *sattva* and *rajas* blend with a heavier admixture of *rajas* and (ii) human beings in whom *sattva* and *rajas* blend with a heavier admixture of *sattva*.[42]

The *āsura* class also consists of two kinds of human beings: (1) those in whom *tamas* preponderates, who are called *rākṣasa* and (2) those in whom *tamas* contains an element of *rajas*, who are not as badly off as the previous group.[43]

It is clear, then, that at the hands of Rāmakavi the classification of beings into *daiva* and *āsura* has undergone an interpretation and an elaboration far beyond anything suggested by Abhinavagupta and Ānanda.

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[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GĪTĀRTHASAṄGRAHA COMPARED WITH THE *GĪTĀBHĀṢYAS* OF ŚAṄKARA AND RĀMĀNUJA

In this part of the book the Gītārthasaṅgraha of Abhinavagupta will be compared with the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on the Gītā. This comparison will be carried out in the following manner:

In Section I an exegetical aspect of the Gītā will be identified wherein Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta are all agreed.

In Section II an exegetical aspect of the Gītā will be identified wherein all the three differ.

In Section III exegetical aspects of the Gītā will be identified wherein Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja take a similar position but Abhinavagupta takes a different one.

In Section IV an exegetical aspect of the Gītā will be identified wherein Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta take a similar position but Rāmānuja differs.

I

One may commence with the recognition of the fact that for all three, for Śaṅkara, for Rāmānuja and for Abhinavagupta,[1] the Bhagavadgītā is primarily a *mokṣaśāstra*, a text designed to indicate the road to salvation. Thus Śaṅkara says that the "aim of this famous Gītāśāstra is, briefly, the Supreme Bliss, a complete cessation of saṁsāra or transmigratory life and its cause."[2] Similarly, Rāmānuja

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[1] A comment on the order in which the names are being mentioned: Śaṅkara is usually believed to have lived from A.D. 788-820 (see T. M. P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 141). The traditional dates for Rāmānuja are A.D. 1017-1137 (*ibid.*, p. 150) and Abhinavagupta is placed in "the second half of the 10th and the first quarter of the 11th century A.D." (Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 4). The proper chronological order of enumeration, therefore, would be Śaṅkara, Abhinavagupta and Rāmānuja. However, Abhinavagupta will be mentioned last as he is the subject of the dissertation who will be successively compared to Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. It is hoped that, though not chronological, this sequence is logical from the point of view of the present undertaking.

[2] A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 4 (diacritical marks added).

concludes his Introduction with the remark that the "Consort of Śrī,"[3] and the "Supreme Person, Nārāyaṇa"[4] while pretending to exhort Arjuna to fight revealed that "which in the Vedānta is declared to be the means of attaining man's supreme end, release."[5] And Abhinavagupta, in his Introductory verse no. 4 says:

> Although Mokṣa is spoken of here in connection with other matters[6] even so the verses of the Bhagavadgītā furnish the attainment thereof.[7]

II

All three are thus agreed that the Gītā is meant to be a *mokṣaśātra* and not a *dharmaśāstra*, an *arthaśāstra* or a *kāmaśāstra*. But although all are agreed about the nature of the goal of the Bhagavadgītā there are differences of opinion among the three scholars when it comes to stating the path the Gītā lays down for the attainment of that goal. Thus Śaṅkara comments, after stating that "the aim of this famous Gītāśāstra is, briefly, the Supreme Bliss, a complete cessation of saṁsāra or transmigratory life and its cause:"[8]

> This accrues from that Religion (Dharma) which consists in a steady devotion to the knowledge of the Self, preceded by the renunciation of all works.[9]

In other words, according to Śaṅkara, *mokṣa* is the goal set forth by the Gītā and *jñānāyoga* is the path laid down for its attainment.[10] Rāmūnuja, while agreeing that the goal set forth in the Gītā is

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[3] J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] This may be compared with Rāmānuja's remark that the Gītā was revealed by the Lord "while pretending to exhort Arjuna to fight" (*ibid.*, p. 46).

[7] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[8] A. Mahādeva Śāstri, *op. cit.*, p. 4 (diacritical marks added).

[9] *Ibid.* The key sentence in Sanskrit being: *tac ca sarvakarmasannyāsapūrvakāt ātmajñaniṣṭharūpāt dharmāt bhavati* (Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 3).

[10] *tathā ca imam eva gītārthaṁ uddiśya bhagavataivoktam — sa'hi dharmaḥ suparyāpto brahmaṇaḥ padavedane iti anugītāsu ... tathā cemam artham abhisandhāya vakṣyati — brahmaṇy ādhāya karmāṇi,' 'yogiṇaḥ karma kurvanti saṅgaṁ tyaktvātmaśuddhaye'* (*ibid.*). It seems to be worth noting that Śaṅkara first quotes from the Anugītā rather than the Gītā to support his position, though he later backs it up with quotations from the Gītā. With this in view, Abhinavagupta's comment towards the end of the XVIIIth chapter applies *a fortiori* to Śaṅkara's Introduction: *evam atra naṣto moha' ityādinā yuddhapravṛttis tāvad arjunasyotpannā natu saṁyagbrahmavittvam jātam iti sūcayan bhāvino' nugītārthasyāvakāśaṁ dadāti* (Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstri Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 770-771).

mokṣa, indicates another path for its attainment, namely, *bhaktiyoga*. Thus according to Rāmānuja:

> While pretending to exhort Arjuna to fight, He has revealed the bhaktiyoga, promoted by jñāna and karma yoga, which in the Vedānta is declared to be the means of attaining man's supreme end, release, and of which He himself is the object.[11]

Now where does Abhinavagupta stand in relation to these positions? According to Abhinavagupta:

> ... the very beginning of the Gītā is an instruction in the path to *mokṣa*. When it is said that knowledge is primary and works should be abandoned or that works grounded in knowledge are not a hindrance to *mokṣa*, the intention is that knowledge is predominant and works no hindrance, not that knowledge and works should be conjoined on an equal footing.[12]

This seems to suggest that like Śaṅkara, Abhinavagupta looked upon the Gītā as preaching the path of *jñānayoga* for the attainment of *mokṣa*. This is true nominally but not substantively, as for Abhinavagupta the content of *jñānayoga* seems to be different from that of Śaṅkara. For Śaṅkara, *jñāna* means the realization of *nirguṇa brahma*, which is the ultimate reality in Advaita Vedānta. In Kāśmīra Śaivism, however, the ultimate is conceived of as both *para brahma* and Śiva at the same time.[13] From this point of view Abhinavagupta's comments towards the close of the Fourteenth chapter of the Gītā are particularly instructive, when he remarks in his gloss on verses 26 and 27, that through these verses the Lord preaches the fundamental way (*mūlabhūtam upāyam*)[14] of attaining salvation. While commenting on *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*[15] he remarks: *aham eva hi brahmaṇaḥ pratiṣṭhā. Mayi sevyamāne brahma bhavati. Anyathā jaḍarūpatayā brahma upāsyamānam mokṣam api sauṣuptād aviśiṣṭam eva prāpayed iti śivam.*[16] That is to say:

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[11] J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 47. The text runs: *pāṇḍutanayayuddhaprotsāhana-vyājena paramapuruṣārthalakṣaṇamokṣasādhanatayā vedāntoditam svaviṣayaṁ jñāna-karmānugṛhītaṁ bhaktiyogam avatārayāmāsa* (Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 2).

[12] *tat kathopakramaṇam eva mokṣamārgopadeśanam. jñānam ca pradhānaṁ karmāṇi cāpahartvyāniti karmaṇām jñānaniṣṭhayā kriyamāṇām api na bandhakatvam iti jñāna-prādhānyaṁ nāntarīyakatvam tu karmaṇām. na tu jñānakarmaṇī samatayā samuccīyete ity atra tātparyam* (Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 8).

[13] See Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-332; J. C. Chatterji, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43; T. M. P.-Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-177; etc.

[14] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 605.

[15] Bhagavadgītā XIV.27(a).

[16] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 608.

> On Me being resorted to, one becomes (one with) Brahma. Otherwise, if Brahman is worshipped as (something) inanimate[17] then it will confer a salvation which too is not different from deep sleep.[18]

The pen-picture which Abhinavagupta draws of the aspirant is also that of a *bhakta par excellence*:

> He who, not desiring any fruit, with his heart permeated by the penetrating quality of God's constant devotion, with his hair standing on end, his body trembling, a flood of tears flowing from his two eyes, quite dilated, answers only with silence though repeatedly badgered [with such questions as] 'why are you dissimulating?' — he alone is purified by the intense unswerving devotion of the Lod (Śiva) — none else.[19]

This emphasis on *bhakti* is also to be found in the verse with which Abhinavagupta concludes his commentary:

> One who is devoid of the delusion of egoism under the influence of the nectar of scintillating devotion, even though present amidst the traffic of the *guṇas* is as good as having gone beyond them thereby.[20]

The negation of the desirability of release in an impersonal Brahman coupled with this emphasis on *bhakti* indicates that it is the path of devotion which Abhinavagupta sees as leading to salvation. If this is so then the question arises: why does he call it *jñāna*?

By *jñāna* Abhinavagupta really means the knowledge of God, of Śiva who is identical with Brahman. Thus he defines the state of *mokṣa* as follows:

> And verily, *mokṣa* — (which is) to merge in Lord Śiva, the eternal, free from desire, who has attained to all the divisions and forms, who is omniscient, and all of whose senses, etc., are pure in nature.[21]

Abhinavagupta was to clarify later[22] in the Paramārthasāra the simultaneity of the personal and impersonal aspects of reality without which *mokṣa* cannot be that experience of unity which it must be:[23]

> When thus the imagination of quality has vanished, and he (the released

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[17] This seems to be said in criticism of Impersonal Brahman or *nirguṇa brahma*.

[18] That is to say, if Brahman is without attributes then salvation will be attributeless too.

[19] For the text see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 605-607.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 608.

[21] Introductory verse no. 3, see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[22] See Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

[23] Introductory verse no. 1, Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 1.

> soul) has surmounted the illusion of *māyā*, he is merged in *Brahman*, as water in water, as milk in milk. When thus through contemplation the group of elements has been resolved into the substance of Śiva, what grief, what delusion can befall him who surveys the universe as *Brahman*?[24]

Then why should Abhinavagupta's position not be referred to as one represented by *bhaktiyoga*?

The difficulty in doing so becomes apparent once the system of Kāśmīra Śaivism is referred to as theistic monism or perhaps less cumbersomely as monistic theism. It is clear that monism is somewhat inconsistent with theism as it is usually understood, in which the distinction between the devotee and God is never fully erased.[25] It appears that Abhinavagupta was fully aware that the monistic type of theism really falls in a class by itself, a class which, qua class, is perhaps closer to the non-dualism of Śaṅkara's school than to traditional theism. This might be the reason why he chose to denote his system as one of *jñāna*, taking care to explain in the body of his commentary that by this he meant the knowledge of Śiva, that Śiva "who is the self of all beings, moving and non-moving. He is immanent (*viśvamaya*) as well as transcendent (*viśvottīrṇa*). He is called *anuttara*, the reality beyond which there is nothing. He is pure consciousness (*caitanya*), absolute experience (*parā samvit*) and supreme lord (*parameśvara*)".[26]

The main differences between the positions of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja and that of Abhinavagupta may now be drawn in a few bold strokes. For Śaṅkara the ultimate is represented by *nirguṇa brahma*; for Rāmānuja by *saguṇa brahma*. For Śaṅkara, *saguṇa brahma* is subordinate to *nirguṇa brahma*. For Abhinavagupta one is not subordinate to the other, *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa brahma* are rather coordinates and represent a parity; nay, an identity. Knowing the one means knowing the other, they are indeed one.

At the level of the *yogas*, for Śaṅkara *jñāna* is primary and *bhakti* and *karma* secondary. For Rāmānuja, *bhakti* is primary and *jñāna* and *karma* secondary. For Abhinavagupta *karma* is secondary, and while nominally he calls *jñāna* primary he really means it in the sense of *bhakti*, but his *bhakti* is more monistically conceived than

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[24] L. D. Barnett, The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London, 1910), p. 734.

[25] T. M. P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Rāmānuja's. One might perhaps say that his system holds *bhakti* and *jñāna* together in salvific tension.

III

It was shown above how all three, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta, agree on the goal of the Gītā but have different views on the means it lays down for the achievement of that goal. In this section an exegetical aspect of the Gītā will be considered on which Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are united but Abhinavagupta takes a different stand.

Such an instance is provided by the attitude towards the authority of the Vedas adopted by these three commentators of the Gītā. For Śaṅkara *śabda* is the foremost *prāmaṇa*.[27] This is implied in his Introduction to the Gītā[28] and is clearly stated in his *bhāṣya* on the *Vedāntasūtra*.[29] He is quite prepared to allow the *karma-kāṇḍa* section of the Vedic corpus to be belittled, as happens in Bhagavadgītā II.42.45-46,[30] but this is consistent with his own position that the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* supersedes the *karma-kāṇḍa*.[31] But although Śaṅkara is prepared to debate the importance of one part of the Veda relative to another, he is not prepared to let the authority of the Vedas as such be called in question. Thus he seems to wholeheartedly approve of the Gītā when it comes out openly in favour of scriptural authority as it does in XVI.23-24.

For Rāmānuja also the scripture is the supreme authority, though his notion of the "scripture" is sometimes somewhat broader than Śaṅkara's. Thus while Śaṅkara glosses the word *śāstram* in Bhagavadgītā XVI.23 as *vedaḥ*,[32] Rāmānuja glosses it as *dharmaśāstra-itihāsa-purāṇādyupabṛṁhitā vedā(ḥ)*. And even if in Rāmānuja "not seldom

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 175.

[28] See A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[29] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, pp. 291, 791.

[30] This is how he can accommodate "the Gītā passages which definitely disparage the ritual religion. 'Those who take delight in the words of the Veda' are called 'undiscerning,' 'full of desires, aiming at heaven;' their doctrines 'yield rebirth as the fruit of actions' and are 'replete with various rites aiming at the goal of enjoyment and power.' 'The Vedas belong to the realm of the three strands (of material nature); be thou free from the three strands.' The really wise man has no more need of the Vedas (the word Veda means 'knowledge') than he needs a water-tank (for irrigation) when there is a general flood. If so pronounced a polemical attitude is exceptional, there are various other passages which treat the ritual religion with scant respect" (Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 180).

[31] T. M. P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 130.

[32] Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

the meaning of *śruti* is made to agree with the Gītā so that the Gītā might agree with *śruti*,"[33] there is little doubt that Rāmānuja was fully conscious of its status as a *smṛti*[34] and of the fact that "being smṛti its task is to support the purport of the Vedas."[35] In other words, though Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja may differ in their interpretation of the *śruti*, they are united in the common acceptance of *śruti-prāmāṇya*.

With Abhinavagupta, however, the situation is somewhat different, at least in two significant ways. Among the *pramāṇas*, both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja regard *śabda* as primary but Abhinavagupta accords it the *third* place in the Tantrāloka; after personal experience and reason: *svasaṁvit-sattarkapati-śāstratrikakramāt*.[36] It is in this background that his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XV.20, one feels, should be understood.[37] Not only that, even as a *śāstra* the Vedas are assigned a 'low' position and are thus in a manner of speaking doubly downgraded. In his Īśvara Partyabhijñā Vimarṣiṇī we find a passage[38] in which the "knowledge of the six Vedic systems of philosophy and of the Vedas with its six branches of learning" are spoken of only as an "antecedent condition"[39] for a proper understanding of *pratyabhijñā* philosophy.

It must be pointed out, lest an erroneous impression might be created, that Abhinavagupta does not run down the Vedas, rather that in his total system they do not loom as large as they do with Śaṅkara and, to a certain extent, with Rāmānuja. Thus in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā II.45 he actually somewhat paradoxically defends the Vedas more explicitly than Śaṅkara or Rāmānuja:

> They (the Vedas) are bondages when they bind. Because Vedic rituals being performed with a mind deluded by (considerations of) pleasure and pain serve to bind, therefore collectively the *guṇas*, informed by desire, should be given up. But if this was meant to be condemnatory of the Vedas, the war, which is the subject (of the poem) could not be justified because of the absence of anything other than the Vedas for determining one's duty [so the statement is really not anti-Vedic]. In the case of those whose desires for the fruit (of action) have melted away, the Vedas are

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[33] Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
[34] J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] Tantrāloka I.149.
[37] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 632.
[38] Quoted by Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, pp. 297-8.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 297.

not bonds, because the Vedas are for them supremely useful for achieving correct knowledge.[40]

Another instance of an approach shared by Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja but not by Abhinavagupta is provided by their glosses on Bhagavadgītā II.59-60. The verses may be translated thus:

The objects of sense turn away
From the embodied one that abstains from food,
Except flavor; flavor also from him
Turns away when he has seen the highest.
For even of one who strives, son of Kuntī,
Of the man of discernment,
The impetuous senses
Carry away the mind by violence.[41]

In these verses the word used for the spiritual aspirant is not clearly stated. He is referred to as the "embodied soul" (*dehin*) in II.59 and as a "man of discernment" (*vipaścit*) in II.60. Śaṅkara glosses the first one as *dehavat*,[42] and the second one as *medhāvin*[43] and thus retains their non-specific character. Rāmānuja does not seem to see the need to gloss these words singly perhaps because of the obviousness of their meanings.[44] Both of them however seem to take these words in a general sense.

With Abhinavagupta, however, the situation is quite different. To see what he is doing with these verses one needs to go back to his gloss on II.54 wherein Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa:

What is the description of the man of stabilized mentality,
That is fixed in concentration, Keśava?
How might the man of stabilized mentality speak,
How might he sit, how walk?[45]

Two elements in Abhinavagupta's gloss are of special interest. Firstly, he states that "the expression *sthiraprajña* has been used to denote the *yogin* who is stationed in *samādhi*."[46] Secondly, he breaks

[40] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 105.
[41] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[42] Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[45] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[46] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114. It may be pointed out that nowhere in the rest of Chapter II does the word *yogin* occur. However, forms connected with the word occur in II.61 (*yukta*) and II.66 (*ayuktasya*).

down Arjuna's query into a set of four questions and the second of these Abhinavagupta formulates as follows: "Is the word *sthitadhīḥ* — which has a sense of corresponding to its specific denotation as well as a sense corresponding to its general connotation — to be understood only as defined by its immediate application or also as inclusive of *tapasvin*? — this is the second question."[47]

Thus Abhinavagupta has posited a possible difference in meaning between *yogin* and *tapasvin* and it is with this frame of reference that he glosses Bhagavadgītā II.59-60. He regards verse II.59 as an answer to the hypothesized question: "Why does the word *sthitaprajña* not apply to *tapasvin* as well?"[48] And the answer according to Abhinavagupta as offered by the verse may be paraphrased thus:

> Although this (*tapasvin*) has no connection with the fields of the senses such as form etc., which are the food (of the senses), even so, in his case (although) the fields of the senses fall back, they do so leaving *rasa* behind, which has the nature of attachment, in the inner self. Therefore he (the *tapasvin*) is not a *sthitaprajña*. Some say that *rasa* is something which can be savoured, like something sweet etc. The *yogin* becomes free from attachment on account of the vision of God. But it (the attachment) does not fall away in the other case of the *tapasvin*.[49]

Abhinavagupta also glosses II.60 with the distinction drawn by him between the *tapasvin* and the *yogin* in mind.

> Because of that (attachment) the mind of the *tapasvin* is carried away by the senses. Or else (the verse implies that) on the part of the energetic *tapasvin* as well as the *yogin* it is the mind which has to be subdued. Thus is the second question decided.[50]

Similarly, at another level, Abhinavagupta takes a position distinct from that of both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja on their glosses on Bhagavadgītā IX.32-33. These are the well-known verses in which the path of devotion is thrown open to *vaiśyas*, *śūdras* and women:

> For if they take refuge in Me, son of Pṛthā,
> Even those who may be of base origin,
> Women, men of artisan class, and serfs too,
> Even they go to the highest goal.

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[47] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[48] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

How much more virtuous Brahmans,
And devout royal seers, too!
A fleeting and joyless world
This; having attained it, devote theyself to Me.[51]

Both Śaṅkara[52] and Rāmānuja[53] take the expression *pāpayonayaḥ* in IX.32 as an adjective qualifying *striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrāḥ*. ... In other words they see only three categories of beings being saved (1) women, (2) *vaiśyas* and (3) *śūdras* according to that verse. By contrast, Abhinavagupta takes the expression as a substantive rather than an adjective and glosses *pāpayonayaḥ* as *paśupakṣisarīsṛpādayaḥ*.[54] Thus according to Abhinavagupta salvation is promised not only to (1) women, (2) *vaiśyas* and (3) *śūdras* but also to (4) animals, birds and reptiles. That is to say, not only to certain classes of human beings but also to members of the animal world. In the body of the gloss Abhinavagupta amplifies the point by adding: "When the (marvellous) deeds of the supremely compassionate God such as the freeing of the elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile) are heard by the thousand, then what doubt can there be (of the salvation of even) those of perverse conduct?"[55]

IV

Now a case may be examined in which Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta converge but Rāmānuja diverges.

Such a case is provided by the comments of these three scholiasts on the nature of the *avatāra* of Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa. Both Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta, though perhaps for different reasons, seem to imply that Kṛṣṇa was an *aṁśāvatāra*. Thus Śaṅkara writes in his introduction to the Bhagavadgītā: ... *sa'ādikartā nārāyaṇākhyo viṣṇuḥ bhaumasya brāhmaṇatvasya rakṣaṇārthaṁ devakyāṁ vasudevādaṁśena kṛṣṇaḥ kila sambahūva*.[56] The crucial segment of the sentence occurs towards the end, in which Kṛṣṇa is referred to as born from a part or fraction of, *aṁśena*, Viṣṇu.[57] Similarly, guided by the Kāśmīra recension of the

[51] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
[52] Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.
[53] Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
[54] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 439.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 440.
[56] Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[57] It may, however, be pointed out that as *aṁśa* "means a part, it would mean that Krishṇa was a partial incarnation of Vishṇu. But of the several forms of the incarnation of God, Krishṇa is on all hands recognised as a *full* incarnation of

Bhagavadgītā which reads *tadātmāṁśam* for *tadātmānam*[58] in Bhagavadgītā IV.7(d), Abhinavagupta glosses the unit thus: *ātmā pūrṇaṣāḍguṇyaḥ aṁśaḥ upakārakatvenāpradhānabhūto yatra tad ātmāṁśam.*[59]

Thus both Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta, it can be argued, seem to refer to Kṛṣṇa as an *aṁśāvatāra*. But not Rāmānuja. His introduction reads like a tribute to the glory and greatness of Viṣṇu = Kṛṣṇa[60] and his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.6-8 does not contain any hint of any abridgement of Viṣṇu's full divinity in his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa.[61] Thus here we have an instance in which a somewhat similar position is taken by Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta and a different position by Rāmānuja.[62]

V

This part of the dissertation may now be concluded by citing a case in which Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta interpret the Gītā along similar lines but Śaṅkara interprets it in a way which differs from them both.

Vishṇu. Accordingly, Ānandagiri explains 'amsena' to mean '*svechchānirmitena-māyāmayena svarūpeṇa*', that is, 'in an illusory form created by His own will'." (A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Also, in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.7 Śaṅkara does not introduce the expression *aṁśa*.)

58 S. K. Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 131.

59 Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

60 J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47.

61 Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

62 Another instance of a convergence between Śaṅkara and Abhinavagupta and divergence in the case of Rāmānuja from them is provided by their respective glosses on the pronominal form, *saḥ* in Bhagavadgītā III.42. Śaṅkara glosses *saḥ* as *buddheḥ dṛṣṭā para' ātmā* (Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 93); so also Abhinavagupta (*sa' ātmā*, Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 179) but not Rāmānuja. He remarks: *sa' kāma ity arthaḥ* (Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 64). R. C. Zaehner observes: "Ś. and practically all commentators both ancient and modern take this to mean the *ātman* which occurs in the following stanza. ... R. takes it as referring to desire in strict accord with the grammatical context. This seems most unlikely ..." (*op. cit.*, p. 177). F. Otto Schrader also remarks that Abhinavagupta "does *not* understand *saḥ* as referring to *kāmaḥ* but to *ātmā*, as do Śaṅkara and others" (*op. cit.*, p. 353) and then goes on to add in a footnote: "Which, by the way, is (*pace* Rāmānuja) the only correct view, not merely because of the parallelism with *Kāṭhaka Upaniṣad* (III.10), but also because according to *Bhag. Gītā* III.40 the Evil One can penetrate into man only so far as his *buddhi* and, consequently, 'he' who is 'beyond *buddhi*' must be the one and only stronghold from which, according to III.43, *kāma* can successfully be combated, i.e., the *ātman*" (*ibid.*, fn. 14).

It may also be added though that while Abhinavagupta aligns with Śaṅkara here, ideologically he stands apart from both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja inasmuch as he seems to interpret the role of *kāma* in that context in a somewhat positive way (see Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 174).

Such an instance is provided by their respective glosses of the word *prajāḥ* as it occurs in Bhagavadgītā III.10. The verse is translated thus by Franklin Edgerton:

> After creating creatures along with (rites of) worship,
> Prajāpati (the Creator) said of old:
> By this ye shall procreate yourselves —
> Let this be your cow-of-wishes.[63]

Rāmānuja takes *prajāḥ* to mean creatures,[64] so also Abhinavagupta.[65] They take the word *prajāḥ* to mean just that. Śaṅkara, however, somewhat surprisingly, glosses the word *prajāḥ* as *trayo varṇāḥ*,[66] that is to say, as including the *brāhmaṇas*, the *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*.[67] It is difficult to avoid the impression that he has done so because the word *prajāḥ* is qualified by the expression *sahayajñāḥ* and obviously Śaṅkara held the view, in accordance with the *smṛti* position, that only the three higher *varṇas*, the *dvijas*, were eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices.[68] This consideration leads him to restrict the semantic scope of the word *prajāḥ* to the three higher *varṇas*. It seems that Śaṅkara has 'over-interpreted' the expression here, for the reference really is not to the performance of sacrifice by human beings but by Prajāpati.[69]

In any case, it is obvious that while both Rāmānuja and Abhinavagupta take the word *prajāḥ* to mean "creatures" here, plain and simple, Śaṅkara takes the word to mean only the three higher *varṇas*.

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[63] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[64] Rāmānuja glosses the word along *Viśiṣṭādvaitic* lines: "When creating the world God observed that the creatures were incapacitated by their natural conjunction with beginningless acit, that their distinctions by name and form were lost, that they were submerged in himself and that, for these reasons they were incapable of attaining one of man's major ends and therefore only qualified for things non-spiritual; in order to resuscitate them He compassionately created them together with sacrifices" (J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 69). However, from our point of view the important point to note is that he takes the word *prajāḥ* to mean creatures in general (see Mahāvana Śāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 48).

[65] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 149.

[66] Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[67] A. Mahādeva Śāstrī translates "Mankind: composed of three castes" (*op. cit.*, p. 98).

[68] See P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Pt. I (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1941), p. 154.

[69] It is interesting to note that Śaṅkara does not cite the Puruṣasūkta, which speaks of all the four *varṇas* in the context of sacrifice here but does so in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV.13 where *cāturvarṇyam* is spoken of (Śaṅkara, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GĪTĀRTHASAṄGRAHA COMPARED WITH SOME MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GĪTĀ

The Gītārthasaṅgraha does not consist solely of Abhinavagupta's own comments on the verses of the Gītā. Occasionally, Abhinavagupta also refers to the views of other thinkers or commentators,[1] with[2] or without comment.[3] If one thus distinguishes between the comments which Abhinavagupta offers on his own and the comments of others which he reports, then the Gītārthasaṅgraha can be brought into a two-fold relationship with the modern interpretations of the Gītā. One could, then, consider the relationship between the comments *reported* by Abhinavagupta to the modern interpretations of the Gītā and one could also consider Abhinavagupta's *own* comments in relation to the modern interpretations of the Gītā.

The expression "modern interpretations" used above, however, is ambiguous and needs to be clarified. To be more precise: by the term modern we mean the period commencing with the first English translation of the Bhagavadgītā into English published in 1785, by Charles Wilkins,[4] and reaching up to our own times. It is obvious that this period has seen the growth of a considerable literature around the Gītā of which the present work itself is in a sense an example. The parameters of the present discussion therefore need to be defined more clearly in view of the wealth of interpretive literature which has accumulated around the Gītā in the modern period. It is now proposed that one *concept* out of this body of literature be selected for comparison with the Gītārthasaṅgraha; and further that a single *commentator* be selected and compared with Abhinavagupta in depth. It is hoped that the choice of Kurukṣetra as the concept and of Mahatma Gandhi as the commentator will not appear too

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[1] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 5; also see F. Otto Schrader, *op. cit.*, pp. 351, 354.

[2] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 439, 441, etc.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 153, etc.

[4] P. J. Marshall, ed., *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 12.

arbitrary in this respect. It will be seen later that by making these selections one is enabled to compare both the comments reported by Abhinavagupta as well as the comments offered by him on his own with the modern interpretations of the Gītā.

I

Although the opinion of modern scholars is divided on the question of the historicity of the Mahābhārata war,[5] to most Hindus prior to the eighteenth century the Mahābhārata war was unquestionably a historical event, which constituted the kernel of the Mahābhārata epic. It was also never doubted that this war was fought "in the region about the modern Delhi, then known as Kurukṣetra."[6] Indeed, the very first verse of the Bhagavadgītā refers to it as the site where the warriors have assembled ready to fight.[7] This site of Kurukṣetra "formed part of the larger Dharmakṣetra which lay between the rivers Yamunā and Sarasvatī and was held in ancient days to be of peculiar sanctity."[8]

There is, however, a consistent trend, it seems, on the part of *modern* Indian[9] commentators of the Bhagavadgītā to look upon Kurukṣetra as something more than a geographical region. This becomes clear as one analyzes the Gītā as interpreted by Aurobindo Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, S. Radhakrishnan and Mahatma Gandhi.

Aurobindo begins by clearly accepting the setting of the Gītā in its literal sense, very much in the orthodox tradition. But while the pre-modern commentators seem to accept the facts of the situation and then pass on, Aurobindo accepts the situation with comments which lead him to interpret the situation in a broader light than the pre-modern commentators ever did. Aurobindo first whole-heartedly accepts the martial setting of the Gītā and writes: "We must remember that the Gītā was composed at a time when war was even more

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[5] See R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Vedic Age* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), Chapter XIV, especially pp. 308-315.

[6] A.L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

[7] Bhagavadgītā I.1.

[8] W. Douglas P. Hill, *The Bhagavadgita* (Oxford University Press), 1928, p. 99, fn. 1. See J.A.B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata Book I* (Chicago University Press, 1973), p. x; see also R.C. Majumdar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 553, Map 2.

[9] The statement may also hold true of some non-Indian commentators. The allegorical possibility is frankly recognized in the Theosophical writings on the Gītā: see Annie Besant, *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavadgītā* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1906), pp. 6ff.; *The Bhagavad-Gītā or the Lord's Song* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1909), preface *passim*.

than it is now a necessary part of human activity, and the idea of its elimination from the scheme of life would have been an absolute chimera."[10] But for Aurobindo, "the physical fact of war, however, is only a special and outward manifestation of a general principle of life. ... War typifies and embodies physically the aspect of battle and struggle which belongs to all life, both our inner and our outer living."[11] Or as he says quite explicitly elsewhere, "Life is a battle and a field of death: this is Kurukṣetra."[12]

Thus for Aurobindo the significance of the Kurukṣetra of the Gītā is existential. Kurukṣetra typifies the existential situation.[13]

Like Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak also fully accepts the martial setting of the Bhagavadgītā on the plains of Kurukṣetra. Also like Aurobindo he was a political activist, but unlike Aurobindo who was destined to retire from the political arena, Bal Gangadhar Tilak "was to suffer six years of imprisonment in Mandalay for sedition in the Muzaffarpur case and produce the powerful *Gītā Rahasya*."[14] Therein he glosses Kurukṣetra as "an open space of ground surrounding the city of Hastināpura," and proceeds to offer the traditional explanation of why it is called Kurukṣetra and *dharmakṣetra*.[15]

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[10] Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita, First Series* (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, 1926), p. 68, also see p. 73.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[13] "There is a method of explaining the Gita in which not only this episode but the whole Mahabharata is turned into an allegory of the inner life and has nothing to do with outward human life and action, but only with the battles of the soul and the powers that strive within us for possession. This is a view which the general character and actual language of the epic does not justify and if pressed, would turn the straightforward philosophical language of the Gita into a constant, laborious and somewhat puerile mystification. The language of the Veda and part at least of the Puranas is plainly symbolic, full of figures and concrete representations of things that lie behind the veil, but the Gita is written in plain terms and professes to solve the great ethical and spiritual difficulties which the life of man raises, and it will not do to go behind this plain language and thought and wrest them to the service of our fancy. But there is this much of truth in the view that the setting of the doctrine, though not symbolical, is certainly typical as indeed the setting of such a discourse as the Gita must necessarily be if it is to have any relation at all with what it frames" (*ibid.*, p. 27).

[14] D. Mackenzie Brown, "The Philosophy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Karma* vs. *Jñāna* in the Gītā Rahasya." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XVII, Number 2 (February 1958), p. 206.

[15] "Kuru, the common ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, was ploughing this field laboriously with his own hands. That is why it is called 'kṣetra' (or field). It is said in the Bhārata that, when Indra thereafter gave the Kuru the blessing that all those who would die on that field in war or while performing religious austerities would obtain heaven, Kuru stopped ploughing the field. (Ma.Bhā. Salya 53.) As a

But even though ostensibly he did nothing more than that and "the more activist doctrines of the Gita ... were dealt with objectively and in a truly orthodox tradition without any reference to political controversies ... the meaning was clear enough because of the author's background and the social and political conditions of India. ... To Tilak ... India was the Dharmakṣetra — the Field of Righteousness — and the inactivity which seemed to have gripped India was but a reflection of the unmanliness which Arjuna felt on the field of battle."[16]

Thus for Bal Gangadhar Tilak the significance of the Kurukṣetra, also referred to as *dharmakṣetra*, is national. The Kurukṣetra represented analogically the national situation. Thus like Aurobindo, although rooted in tradition, for Bal Gangadhar Tilak as well, the term Kurukṣetra comes to stand for much more than the geographical region it represents.

At the hands of S. Radhakrishnan, the term Kurukṣetra is extended even beyond the national theater, to the international. And while for Aurobindo the Gītā represented a situation which was "typical" and for Bal Gangadhar Tilak a situation which was analogical, for Radhakrishnan it comes to represent a situation which is symbolical, and one in which the symbolic significance is the primary one. Thus S. Radhakrishnan writes:

> The world is *dharmakṣetra*; the battleground is a moral struggle. The decisive issue lies in the heart of men where the battles are fought daily and hourly ... the world is *dharmakṣetra*, the nursery of saints where the sacred flame of the spirit is never permitted to go out.[17]

The same symbolic interpretation is also imparted to the expression *kurukṣetra*, which he describes as "the land of the Kurus, a leading clan of the period." Then he goes on to point out that both the contending parties, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, had descended from a common ancestor. This fact is now interpreted symbolically: "The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas represent the two great movements, the upward and the downward, the divine and the demoniac, the *dharma* which helps us to grow in our spiritual stature and the

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result of this blessing, this field came to be called '*dharmakṣetra*' or 'sacred ground'" (Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Srimad Bhagavadgītā Rahasya*, Vol. II [Poona: 1936], p. 852).

[16] K. M. Panikkar, *The Foundations of New India* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1963), p. 43.

[17] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948), p. 79.

adharma which drags us down deeper into entanglement with matter. The two are not irreconcilable as they spring from the same source. The Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas are cousins and have a common ancestry."[18]

The tendency to give primacy to the symbolic rather than the literal aspect of the Gītā finds its fullest expression in the interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā offered by Mahatma Gandhi. While the other commentators referred to earlier derived various typical, analogical or symbolical significances from the scene of battle, for Mahatma Gandhi the scene of battle itself is merely symbolical, a setting devised for the delivery of the message. Thus Mahadev Desai quoted Mahatma Gandhi as saying:

> The Gītā is not a historical discourse. A physical illustration is often needed to drive home a spiritual truth. It is a description not of war between cousins but between the two natures in us — the Good and the Evil.[19]
> He further quotes Mahatma Gandhi to the effect that: I regard Duryodhana and his party as the baser impulses in man, and Arjuna and his party as the higher impulses. The field of battle is our own body. An eternal battle is going on between the two camps, and the Poet-seer vividly describes it.[20]

What then is the Kurukṣetra? Mahatma Gandhi's answer is that the "human body is the battlefield where the eternal duel between Right and Wrong goes on. Therefore it is capable of being turned into the gateway to Freedom. It is born in sin and becomes the seed-bed of sin. Hence it is also called the field of Kuru."[21] Hence the human body itself is the Kurukṣetra.

To sum up: for Aurobindo the significance of Kurukṣetra is existential, martial and typical; for Bal Gangadhar Tilak it is national,

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18 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

19 Mahadev Desai, *The Gita according to Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), p. 136. But it may be pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi does not so much deny the historicity of the Mahābhārata as assert the primacy of allegory over history. "The persons described therein may be historical but the author of the Mahābhārata has used them merely to drive home his religious theme" (*ibid.*, p. 128). Also see M.K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1950), p. 150ff.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 136. This quotation is from *Young India*, 12-11-1925.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 135. For an attempt at a consolidated presentation of Mahatma Gandhi's arguments in favour of an allegorical interpretation of the Gītā see R.D. Ranade, *The Bhagavadgītā as a Philosophy of God-Realisation* (Nagpur: M.S. Modak, 1959), pp. 141-143.

political and metaphorical; for S. Radhakrishnan it is universal, moral and symbolical; and for Mahatma Gandhi it is individual, ethical and allegorical. For none of them is the significance purely geographical or historical as it seems to have been for the pre-modern commentators of the Gītā.[22]

II

It is clear, then, that one feature of the commentaries on the Gītā in modern times is a tendency to interpret the Kurukṣetra as something more than a topographical detail. This feature of modern literature on the Gītā can now be brought into relation with a tradition of the interpretation of the Gītā reported by Abhinavagupta. In the Gītārthasaṅgraha, in his gloss on the very first verse of the Bhagavadgītā, after making his own remarks,[23] Abhinavagupta refers to a tradition of interpreting the Gītā in which the Kurukṣetra is equated with the human body and is thus interpreted as something more than just the geographical venue of "the battle of the Bharatas."[24] This tradition he reports is particularly close to the interpretation of Kurukṣetra developed by Mahatma Gandhi. The relevant passage, Abhinavagupta's gloss on Gītā I.1, translates as follows:

> Herein some speak of an alternative interpretation. [They explain the word *kurukṣetra* as] the field of the Kurus: *Kurūṇām* = *karaṇānām*— organs of sense; *kṣetra* (field) = that which favours, that is, the field of the senses is the favourer of all the properties of transmigration as being

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[22] We have carried out here, in re Kurukṣetra and thus only to a limited extent, "a comparative study of several classical and contemporary interpretations of the Bhagavadgītā by Indian authors, in order to discover any significant differences between the classical and contemporary as two distinct groups, and also between individual interpretations" (*infra*, p. 1), a task which has been carried out in greater scope and depth by Robert Walter Stevenson, "Historical Change in Scriptural Interpretation: A Comparative Study of Classical and Contemporary Commentaries on the Bhagavadgita (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, March 1975). Robert Walter Stevenson, however, has not touched on the notion of Kurukṣetra and has confined his detailed treatment to Avatāra, Ahiṁsā, Varṇa and Yajña (*ibid*., p. iii).

[23] K.S. Ramaswamy Sastrigal seems to attribute this view to Abhinavagupta. He remarks: "Abhinava Guptacarya says that *kṣetra* means the body and the war referred to is between the righteous and the unrighteous tendencies in man" (*The Bhagavadgita with translation and notes*, Vol. I [Srirangam: Sri Vani Vilas Press, 1927], p. 47). But Abhinavagupta introduces this viewpoint with the remark: *atra kecit vyākhyāvikalpam āhuḥ* (Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit*., p. 8). We may, however, infer that Abhinavagupta goes along with this view to a certain extent as he does not criticize it and may even be seen as developing it towards the end of the gloss.

[24] See Pāṇini, 4.2.56.

that which helps to bring them about (i.e., the human body). Whereas *dharmakṣetra* (the field of *dharma*) is to be understood from the sentence, "This is the highest dharma; to see the soul by means of Yoga," namely as being the body of the [aspirant for whom the Gītā is] intended, a body which offers salvation by its attainment of *apavarga* through the abandonment of everything opposed to *dharma*. [So that the question asked by king Dhṛtarāṣṭra may be paraphrased thus:] Standing in that [battle] where passion and detachment, anger and forbearance, etc., have come together in mutual conflict, for the senses, etc., always aim at the injury of the body — what have my ignorant volitions, comparable to ignorant men, accomplished, and what have (my) wise (volitions), the Pāṇḍavas, comparable to men of knowledge, accomplished? That is to say, who has defeated whom?

The parallels between these remarks on the first verse of the Bhagavadgītā recorded in the tenth century A.D. and the remarks made by Mahatma Gandhi in the twentieth century A.D. are quite obvious. This enables us to offer the conclusion that whereas Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps original in regarding the message of the Bhagavadgītā to be that of *ahiṁsā* he was certainly not the first to think up an allegorical interpretation on which he based his opinion.[25]

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[25] The allegorical interpretation of the Gītā became quite current around the turn of the century (see W. Douglas Hill, *The Bhagavadgita* [Oxford University Press, 1928], p. 99) and continues to be popular (see A. L. Herman, *The Bhagavad Gita: A Translation and Critical Commentary* [Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1973], pp. 107-8). It is important to realize, however, that Mahatma Gandhi seems to come by the allegorical interpretation on his own, for he says quite clearly that "Even in 1888-89, when I first became acquainted with the *Gita*, I felt that it was not a historical work, but that, under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind and that physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring" (Mahadev Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 127). It should be further noted that according to Mahatma Gandhi his "first acquaintance with the *Gita* began in 1888-9 with the verse translation by Sir Edwin Arnold known as the Song Celestial" (*ibid.*, p. 126). This translation does not project the Gītā as an allegory (see Edwin Arnold, *The Song Celestial or Bhagavadgita* [Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888], p. 9), unlike the translations or studies by Annie Besant (*The Bhagavad Gita or The Lord's Song*, preface: *Hints on the Study of the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 6 ff.). Hence it is potentially misleading to state, as some have done, that Mahatma Gandhi was first introduced to the Gītā through Annie Besant's translation (see Agehananda Bharati, "The Hindu Renaissance and its Apologetic Patterns," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2 (February 1970), pp. 274-275). Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi refers to his attempts to read Bal Gangadhar Tilak's commentary on the Gītā (Mahadev Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 126) which again does *not* espouse such an allegorical interpretation of the Gītā. It seems that the similarity in the exposition of the Gītā referred to by Abhinavagupta and its exposition by Mahatma Gandhi provides a case of exegetical convergence which spans several centuries.

III

One may now turn to a comparison of Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi as commentators on the Bhagavadgītā. Such a comparison may be carried out by identifying the points of similarity and difference between them. It may also be extended to examine in what ways each is unique and it may be further elaborated by carrying out an in-depth study of one aspect of their interpretation.

In one respect the two commentators seem to be somewhat similar. Both of them were practitioners of religion as distinguished from those commentators for whom commenting on the Gītā may be an intellectual exercise. As a matter of fact Mahatma Gandhi offers this as his justification for daring to comment on the Gītā notwithstanding his limited acquaintance with Sanskrit. Mahatma Gandhi points out that his desire to write a commentary on the Gītā

> does not mean any disrespect to the other renderings. They have their own place. But I am not aware of the claim made by the translators of enforcing their meaning of the Gita into their lives. At the back of my reading there is the claim of an endeavour to enforce the meaning of my own conduct for an unbroken period of 40 years. For this reason I do indeed harbour the wish that all Gujarati men or women, wishing to shape their conduct according to their faith, should digest and derive strength from the translations here presented.[26]

Abhinavagupta does not make such a direct statement but the Gītārthasaṅgraha is one of his philosophical works and Kanti Chandra Pandey points out that "Abhinava's philosophical works are considered to be very important, because people have reason to believe that the statements on supersensuous matters contained therein are based upon the author's personal experience, gained through spiritual experience, which he carried on for years, as we have attempted to show in his biography. To personal experience he gives the first, to reason the second and to ancient authority only the third place as the basis of his views on supersensuous matters."[27] It is significant that Mahatma Gandhi similarly states that he cannot allow scripture to supersede reason and gives the pride of place to the "inner voice."[28] Thus both Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi, as commentators on the Gītā, share an orientation rooted in personal spiritual experience.

Their general conclusion about the fundamental message of the Gītā,

[26] Mahadev Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
[27] Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
[28] Mahatma Gandhi, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

however, differs. For Abhinavagupta the chief *yoga* inculcated by the Gītā is *jñāna* (understood in a sense somewhat different from Śaṅkara's). According to Mahatma Gandhi, however, the primary *yoga* inculcated by the Gītā is one of *niṣkāma karma* or *karma yoga*.

Thus though in some respects Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi interpret the Gītā similarly, in other respects they differ. In this sense the relationship between the two may be one of *bhedābheda*; but they are also unique in some respects. It has already been seen how Abhinavagupta seems to be unique in the sense in which he interprets his *jñāna* consistently with his own philosophical orientation characteristic of Kāśmīra Śaivism but inconsistently with its common understanding. It now remains to be demonstrated that Mahatma Gandhi is unique in regarding *ahiṁsā* as a cardinal teaching of the Gītā. To see this the following clarifying question may be asked: has anyone interpreted the Gītā as preaching non-violence before Mahatma Gandhi?

IV

In response to this question one may begin by pointing out that there indeed are some hints in ancient Hindu literature which point in that direction. To see their force it is important to realize that one of the reasons why Mahatma Gandhi thought that the message of the Gītā was non-violence, was, because, according to him that was the message of the Mahābhārata itself, of which, as he said, "the *Gita* is a minute part."[29] Thus he wrote while remarking on the message of the Gītā:

> The author of the Mahabharata has not established the necessity of physical warfare; on the contrary he has proved its futility. He has made the victors shed tears of sorrow and repentance and has left them nothing but a legacy of miseries.[30]

In this context certain passages of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa make interesting reading. Indeed, "it is usually said that the Bhāgavata Purāṇa begins where the Mahābhārata ends," seeking to correct "a story which tells of gambling, dishonouring of women and a devastating war which ends in a pyrrhic victory...."[31] In the fifth chapter of the first canto we actually find Vyāsa, the putative author of the Mahābhārata, being criticized by Nārada:

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[29] M. K. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[31] T. S. Rukmani, *A Critical Study of the Bhagavata Purana* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1970), p. 6.

> It was a great error on your part to have enjoined terrible acts (acts involving destruction of life) in the name of religion on men who are naturally addicted to such acts. Misguided by these precepts of yours (in the Mahabharata) the ordinary man of the world would believe such acts to be pious and would refuse to honour the teachings that prohibit such action.[32]

In other words, Nārada was complaining that the justification of violence involved in the Mahābhārata and especially in the Gītā could have disastrous consequences in general and urged sage Vyāsa to compose a devotional work to offset this effect, namely the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Thus we find that even as far back as the 10th century A.D., the date usually assigned to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa,[33] there was a certain uneasiness in certain Hindu minds regarding the violent nature of the Mahābhārata episode. The ancient thinker writing in the name of Nārada to be sure, took a different route than Mahatma Gandhi; he wanted a new work to turn people's mind towards the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa, away from the terrible war and its justification. Mahatma Gandhi thought that the work itself implied condemnation of violence. But both the pseudonymous Nārada and the famous Mahatma were grappling with the same issue: the violent nature of the Mahābhāratan narrative and its reconciliation with higher spiritual ends.

The Gandhian solution though, must be regarded as unique for Nārada explicitly recognised the violence involved in the Mahābhārata and condemned it but Mahatma Gandhi commended it as a warning to others. But through this difference in attitude between using it as a warning rather than as an example he could claim, as none had done, that the *real* message of the Mahābhārata and the Gītā was non-violence.

How then do we answer the question: did anyone interpret the Gītā as preaching non-violence before Mahatma Gandhi did so? The answer seems to be that no one interpreted the Gītā like him on this point; even though it may be argued that the message of non-violence is implied in the Mahābhārata and even though we detect undercurrents of dissatisfaction with the violence involved

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[32] *Ibid.*, Bhāgavata Purāṇa I.5.15.

[33] Milton Singer, ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes* [Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966], p. 4.

therein. No one before Mahatma Gandhi seems to have clearly and unambiguously stated the message of the Bhagavadgītā, and indeed of the Mahābhārata, to have been non-violence.

Thus both Abhinavagupta and Mahatma Gandhi are similar in some respects, but in other respects they differ. Indeed, they differ to a degree that of each it can be claimed that he made a unique individual contribution to the interpretation of the Gītā, "the final interpretation of which will doubtless never be written."[34]

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[34] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOME EXTRAORDINARY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ IN THE GĪTĀRTHASAṄGRAHA

Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Bhagavadgītā is remarkable for the extraordinary explanations it offers of some fairly well-known verses of the Gītā. Abhinavagupta obviously meant what he said in his introductory verses to the Bhagavadgītā: that he intends to bring to light the hidden or esoteric meaning of the verses. This tendency of Abhinavagupta to give unusual, extraordinary or esoteric interpretations to some of the verses of the Bhagavadgītā may now be examined in some detail.

To illustrate the point, one may begin by selecting some verses from the second chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, one of the longer chapters of that religious classic. Bhagavadgītā II.19 runs as follows:

ya enaṁ vetti hantāraṁ
yaś cainaṁ manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto
nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate[1]

Franklin Edgerton translates the verse thus:

Who believes him a slayer,
And who thinks him slain,
Both these understand not:
He slays not, is not slain.[2]

Abhinavagupta comments:

> Physical bodies are mortal and perishable. The *ātman* is eternal for it is not an object of knowledge (but the subject). Transformation belongs to the objects of knowledge, to inert matter, not to the spirit which is pure consciousness. This is so because it cannot possess other than its own nature.

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[1] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 121.

[2] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

> Thus the physical bodies are forever perishable and not to be grieved over. The *ātman* is forever imperishable and therefore should not be grieved for.[3]

Up to this point the commentary is quite straightforward. Soon, however, Abhinavagupta introduces a fine grammatical point when he adds:

> It is because of this that the sage Vyāsa has exhibited a single Kṛtya suffix in two different senses in the passage *aśocyān anvaśocas tvam*.[4]

Obviously, Abhinavagupta interprets the Kṛtya suffix *ṇyat* in *aśocyān* in the sense of *śakya*[5] as applied to the body and in the sense of *arha*[6] as applied to the soul. That is to say: "We *cannot* grieve for the body, we *should* not grieve for the soul."[7] This is a fine point not made by other commentators to the best of our knowledge.

The very next comment by Abhinavagupta in the Second Chapter is brief, but offers a novel explanation. The concerned verse, Bhagavadgītā II.21, runs as follows:

> vedāvināśinaṁ nityaṁ
> ya enam ajam avyayam
> kathaṁ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha
> kaṁ ghātayati hanti kam[8]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

> Who knows as indestructible and eternal
> This unborn, imperishable one,

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[3] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Pāṇini 3.3.172.

[6] Pāṇini 3.3.169.

[7] Abhinavagupta's grammatical comments are not always as perspicacious. For instance, he comments on the irregular form *vyathanti* in Bhagavadgītā XIV.2 thus:

> [The *ti* suffix in the verbal form] *vyathanti* is so on account of metrical exigency [as it really should be *vyathante* and not *vyathanti*, but that would violate the metre].

In this gloss Abhinavagupta cites the *tiṅ* suffix (Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 587). But the mere mention of the *tiṅ* suffix by Abhinavagupta leaves his comment looking somewhat anemic as any verbal suffix, active or middle, can be referred to by *tiṅ* (see Pāṇini 3.4.78). So what Abhinavagupta really implies but leaves unsaid is that the switch in the *tiṅ* suffix from middle to active form is due to metrical reasons. Perhaps by *tiṅ* Abhinavagupta merely had the active ending in mind (but see Śrīśa Chandra Vasu, *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini* Vol. I [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962], p. 589).

[8] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 121.

That man, son of Pṛthā, how
Can he slay or cause to slay — whom?[9]

Abhinavagupta remarks: "He who takes the *soul* as the slayer and the *body* as the slain is ignorant."[10] The point to note here is that no translator or commentator of the Bhagavadgītā distinguishes between the slayer and the slain in terms of body and soul. S. Radhakrishnan draws comparison with the following lines from Emerson's *Brahma*:

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass and turn again.[11]

Here the slayer and slain seem to be related to the body or the person.[12] More often, in the light of the previous verse of the Bhagavadgītā and the first half of this one, the homicidal impeccability is believed to belong to the soul. As R.C. Zaehner points out:

> This stanza is based on Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.19, the second line being identical. For the first line Kaṭha Upaniṣad has: "Should the killer think, 'I kill,' or the killed, 'I have been killed'. ..." The Gītā gives the more satisfactory sense since *enaṁ* 'he,' must refer to the embodied self already mentioned.[13]

In other words *enaṁ* could refer to (1) the body; (2) the self or (3) most likely, the embodied self. But in any case the slayer and the slain are not distinguished, both in each case being either the body or the self or the embodied self. But Abhinavagupta departs from this pattern when he remarks: "He who takes the *soul* as the slayer and the *body* as slain is ignorant." This is a novel exegetical twist.

It is also interesting that Abhinavagupta is not bothered by the moral issue involved here, unlike Bhāskara who, after "glossing each word in order to give the literal meaning" of the verse cited above "turns, to refute the religious enthusiast Śaṁkara":

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[9] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[10] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67, emphasis added.

[11] S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 107, fn. 2.

[12] Prof. Daniel H. H. Ingalls translates the verse in this sense: "He who knows the self to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, unchanging, how should that man cause to be killed anyone or kill anyone" (Dharma and Mokṣa, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. VII, Numbers 1 and 2 (April, July 1957), p. 42.

[13] R.C. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

> Here some philosophers who are too lazy to work for liberation (*mokṣa*) explain the verse by imputing to the Blessed One the following doctrine: "For the wise man all works are excluded; such is the Blessed One's intention in this passage. The expression 'kills' is used merely as an example. Works which are enjoined in scripture are enjoined only on the ignorant. This is the judgment of the Blessed One." This explanation of the Blessed One's intention that pays no attention to the preceding words of the text will not do. Why? Because it is to urge Arjuna on to battle that the nature of the self is here described. Having told him, "Therefore, fight, Bhārata," God sets out to establish the rightness of this with the words, "It is not born," etc. If the intention of this verse were the renouncing of all work, surely it should not have been told to Arjuna. Just suppose that the Blessed One had stated that works were impossible for the wise man who knows that the self is void of the six organic alterations. The same might just as well hold true of Arjuna, in which case he would cease to act. Furthermore, all the following verses would be improper. Accordingly, one should not cherish a vain hope, nor let one's mind by tempted to forsake one's moral duty (*dharma*), thinking, "Let us just sit here comfortably and receive liberation (*mokṣa*)."
>
> Again:
>
> The distinction of good and evil, of bound and released, fits only with our view.
>
> Or:
>
> A just battle, that is, one which does not depart from morality (*dharma*), than this nothing makes for greater good. For others, too, adherence to their proper code of morals makes for good. In this way the text combines knowledge and works as both making for good.[14]

The fact that Abhinavagupta does not make similar comments is historically important as it confirms the fact that the Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara to whose commentary he refers approvingly in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.2, is different from the Bhāskara cited above.[15]

One may next turn to Bhagavadgītā II.49 for another illustration of Abhinavagupta's originality as an exegete. The verse runs as follows:

dūreṇa hy avaraṁ karma
    buddhiyogād dhanaṁjaya
buddhau saraṇam anviccha
    kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ[16]

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[14] Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[15] See F. Otto Schrader, Ancient Gita Commentaries, *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 2 (June 1934), pp. 348-349, 352.

[16] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 123.

Franklin Edgerton translates:

For action is far inferior
To discipline of mental attitude, Dhanaṃjaya.
In the mental attitude seek thy (religious) refuge;
Wretched are those whose motive is the fruit (of [action).[17]

Abhinavagupta offers here quite an extraordinary interpretation of the first line of the text. He comments:

Verily through *buddhi yoga* (discipline of judgment) the inferior *karma* beset with evil is removed.[18]

All commentators of the Gītā, ancient and modern, see in this verse a relative comparison being instituted between *karma* and *buddhi yoga* to the disadvantage of the former. Indeed R.C. Zaehner goes so far as to point out that elsewhere the Gītā seems to take a somewhat contradictory position:

The superiority of *buddhi-yoga* over *karma*, 'action,' seems to be contradicted in 3.8 where work (*karma*) is said to be better than doing no work at all (*akarman*) which is another word for *saṁnyāsa* ('renunciation'). Krishna, however, is now speaking of works *tout court*: He has not yet fully expounded his doctrine of performing actions without regard to their fruits or results. This, because of the total detachment it entails, is equivalent to doing nothing at all. All this will become clearer in the sequel.[19]

Interestingly enough, there is an additional verse in the Kāśmīrī text preceding this one, which speaks of detached action prior to the verse under discussion and not "in the sequel." It runs:

yasya sarve samārambhā nirāśir-bandhanās tv iha
tyāge yasya hutam sarvam sa tyāgī sa ca buddhimān[20]

He, all whose undertakings in this world are free from the bondage of expectation, who has sacrificed everything in (the fire of) renunciation, he is the true renouncer and is really wise.

Abhinavagupta has a gloss on the verse[21] so he obviously takes note of it; nevertheless his explanation of the next verse is not affected and remains extraordinary.

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[17] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[18] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[19] R.C. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
[20] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 123 (88*).
[21] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 108.

It is not only in the Second Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā that some of Abhinavagupta's interpretations take one by surprise. Some of his interpretations in Chapter IV of the Bhagavadgītā have a touch of novelty as well. Early in the Fourth Chapter the following verse appears:

> sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya
> yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
> bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti
> rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam[22]

It is the third *pāda* which is of interest here. None of the ancient commentators make much of it and one modern commentator who does gloss that *pāda* does so with a distinctly modern touch. Thus S. Radhakrishnan comments:

> *bhaktosi me sakhā ceti*: Thou art My devotee and My friend. Revelation is never closed. So long as the human heart has qualities of devotion and friendship, God will disclose His secrets to them. Divine self-communication is possible wherever we have sincerity and a sense of need. Religious revelation is not a past event; it is that which continues to be. It is possible for all beings and not the privilege of a few. "Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice," said Jesus to Pilate.[23]

Now Abhinavagupta. In the third verse of the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna why He is revealing to him the great secret of Yoga whose transmission has suffered interruption but is now being reinstituted by Kṛṣṇa.[24] And why, indeed, is Kṛṣṇa revealing the secret of that Yoga to Arjuna? Because, says Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna: "You are my devotee and friend." Almost all ancient commentators[25] and modern translators[26] of the Bhagavadgītā, as noted earlier, pass over this statement without making anything of the distinction which might be drawn between a devotee (*bhakta*) and a friend (*sakhā*). Arjuna is both and that seems to be the end of the matter. But not for Abhinavagupta.[27] Abhinavagupta glosses

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[22] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[23] S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

[24] Bhagavadgītā IV.1-3.

[25] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

[26] See W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 103; Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 23; R. C. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 181; Nataraja Guru, *The Bhagavad Gita* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p. 217, etc.

[27] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 184.

the clause thus: "You are my devotee and my supreme friend. By (the particle) *ca* the conjunction of a subordinate fact with a principal one[28] is spoken of. Therefore, as in going out for begging, begging is primary and the fetching of the cow is secondary,[29] so also devotion to the Guru is primary here and not friendship — this is the intended meaning."

How far is Abhinavagupta justified in subordinating *sakhā* to *bhakta* on the strength of the copulative *ca*?

The conjunctive *ca*, like the English "and," can be used to express several forms of association: those of opposition (light and darkness); subordination (car and wheel); coordination (tea and coffee) and aggregation (this and that). It is also used to express ordination (i.e., in order to; as in "go and get this book") and qualification (friend, philosopher and guide). Abhinavagupta has chosen the sense of 'subordination" out of these various options as his preferred sense for *ca*.[30] To what extent is he justified in doing so?

It will now be contended that the use of the *ca* here could be understood in the sense of qualification with as much, or perhaps even more, justification than in the sense of subordination.

In the Bhaktic literature of Hinduism several forms of devotion are recognized, patterned on human relationships. "There are several kinds of human relationship such as filial affection, friendship, reverence, servitude, etc. The *bhakta* may hold himself as related to God in any of these ways."[31] These attitudes, which are called *bhāvas* include the *sakhya bhāva* which is "comparable to the love and

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[28] This is the meaning of the word *anvācaya*, see Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), p. 423.

[29] An obvious reference to the standard illustration of the use of *ca* in the sense of *anvācaya*: *bho bhikṣām aṭa gāṁ cānaya*, "where going out to beg is enjoined to the beggar as his principal object, and the bringing of a cow (if he can see any) is tacked on to it as a secondary object" (Vaman Shivram Apte, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

[30] On particle *ca* see William Dwight Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar* (Harvard University Press, 1937), p. 417 (1133); Arthur A. Macdonell, *A Sanskrit Grammar for Students* (Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 151; Otto Böhtlingk und Rudolph Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, Zweiter Teil (Wiesbaden: Antiquariat Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), pp. 905-906.

[31] T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism* (Bombay: Chetana Ltd., 1960), p. 91. Thus, for instance, Vallabhācārya "taught *bhakti* based on strong emotional ties already present in human beings: that of the master-servant, husband-wife, king-subject, father and mother-children; that of friend-friend of the same sex; that of parent-child, adult-child; and that of lover-beloved" (Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya* [Faridabad, Haryana: Thomson Press (India) Ltd., 1976], p. 92).

regard that a man has for his friend."[32] Arjuna's devotion to Kṛṣṇa is often placed in this category.[33] It is clear, therefore, that devotion need not be viewed in some sense in *opposition* to friendship as Abhinavagupta seems to have done; rather, in the light of the subsequent developments within the tradition itself, which looks upon Arjuna as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa of the *sakhya* type, such a position seems hard to sustain. Indeed, the apposition of the descriptions of Arjuna in the same breath as devotee and friend may have been seminal in the context of the subsequent developments within the tradition.[34] Thus the description of Arjuna as friend might with equal, if not more, justification be looked upon as qualifying the nature of his devotion, as he has already been addressed as a devotee, rather than as merely subordinate to it.[35]

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[32] T. M. P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] That Arjuna, at least prior to the theophany, looked upon Kṛṣṇa as a friend becomes clear from Bhagavadgītā XI.41.42.

[35] Rūpa Gosvāmī, in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ* (Second *laharī*, verses 188-193) explains that "there are two kinds of *sakhya*: one is complete faith in Shri Kṛṣṇa's willingness to give protection from the dangers of the world and the other is the feeling with which a *bhakta* may consider himself a friend of Shri Kṛṣṇa and treat him with the kind of attachment that is, in ordinary life, reserved for very close friends" (Richard Barz, *op. cit.*, p. 84). It is obvious that at this stage in the Gītā, although Arjuna has already sought Kṛṣṇa's guidance (II.7), Arjuna does not completely throw himself in Kṛṣṇa's protection. Indeed, although in many verses he is asked to do so (XVIII.66 etc.), and in many verses he stands in awe of Kṛṣṇa (Chapter XI, *passim*) in the end when he consents to fight he does so by merely saying "I shall do as you say" (XVIII.73) and not by any grand display of 'faith.' Indeed, the Gītā does at places "demand from the devotee ... complete surrender and a highly emotional involvement through love and *bhakti*.

> Be with thy mind fixed in Me, by My devotee, by My worshipper, bow down to Me, and thou shalt come even to Me; this I verily swear unto thee; thou art beloved of Me. Abandoning all acts, take sanctuary with Me alone. I shall liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve.

These stanzas so emphatically spoken by Krishna to Arjuna have also held the minds of devoted Hindus and have given rise to considerable exegesis and application" (Milton Singer, ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes* [Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966], p. 157). It should be noted, however, that these stanzas are "emphatically spoken by Krishna to Arjuna" demanding complete surrender and not by Arjuna to Krishna as representing complete surrender. In this respect it is important to bear in mind that in the Hindu mythos, after his infantile and juvenile phases "Krishna emerges as a mighty hero, a leading character in the Mahābhārata legend, preaching the *Bhagavad Gītā* to his *friend* Arjuna before the great battle and destroying demons and wicked kings throughout India. In these three main phases he is still the chief object of worship among the ordinary folk of India — a divinity of remarkable psychological completeness, standing to his worshippers not only in the relation of father, *friend* and elder brother, but also of lover and husband, and even of son" (R. C. Zaehner, ed., *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1959], p. 231, emphasis added).

Abhinavagupta's exegeses of Bhagavadgītā IV.16-17 also represent a departure from the generally accepted interpretation. The concerned verses run as follows:

kiṁ karma kimakarmeti
kavayo'py atra mohitāḥ
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi
yaj jñātvā mokṣyase'śubhāt

karmaṇo hy api boddhavyam
boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyam
gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ[36]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

What is action, what inaction?
About this even sages are bewildered.
So I shall explain action to thee,
Knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil.

For one must understand the nature of action, on the [one hand,
And must understand the nature of mis-action,
And must understand the nature of inaction:
Hard to penetrate is the course of action.[37]

These are admittedly difficult verses to interpret. This is clear from the fact that

> Madhvācārya suggests the separation of *naḥ* from *karma* etc., 'that work, etc., proceeds from me.' Rāmānuja explains *vikarman* as 'variety of actions for various fruits' and identifies *akarman* with *jñāna*.[38]

Moreover,

> Śaṁkarācārya explains that both action and inaction (which is a kind of action) belong to the body, while the deluded believe they belong to the Self; he is wise who understands that action, as being of the body, is inaction of the Self, and that inaction is also a kind of action and pertains to the body. Rāmānuja identifies *akarman* with *jñāna*, and says that the wise man is he who sees *jñāna* in all true performance of work,

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36 V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 132.
37 Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
38 W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 105, fn. 3.

and that *jñāna* itself is a kind of action. Madhvācārya says that he is wise who sees God alone as always active, whether he himself is active or inactive.[39]

Thus the verses are obviously capable of divergent interpretations. But even here Abhinavagupta takes off on a trajectory all of his own. He writes:

> Next it is said: it is not the fact that action alone leads to salvation. Wherefore [the two verses beginning] *kiṁ karma* and *karmaṇo hy api.* The distinction between what is action and what is not action is hard to understand. For even in the performance of (proper) action evil action is present as in the killing of the victim in the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. Moreover, there is good present even in wrong (forbidden) action as in saving people from suffering by killing criminals. Besides, even when one is (physically) doing nothing, both good and evil action is being performed by speech and mind because actions of that sort cannot be avoided except by knowledge. Therefore even the wise do not know what *karma* is on account of its mysterious nature: whether by this good action our good will come about and whether by not performing these actions our salvation will not be achieved. Therefore that which is about to be spoken of, which is capable of burning up the fuel of all *karma* good and bad—must be sought: this is what the Lord means.[40]

So far the unique element in Abhinavagupta's interpretation has not yet emerged. It does so as he continues his gloss on IV.18:

> To explain that, (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] *karmāṇi*: he who sees the absence of action (*karma*) in his own actions because of the absence of the sense of agency (i.e., that he is the agent), (and who), by having calmed his passions realized that his non-action (if) performed by others, is really performed by himself: he alone is fully wise amongst all; he acts in full, in every (sense). So how could any fruit (retribution) be given him for any action? Even in the case of the retribution that has now arisen (that is in a ripe state) he cuts off, severs the *karmas* (from himself). So he either performs all actions or he performs none: this is the supreme secret. (He is wise) who sees in all of his activity of body and sense the absence of action, the non-involvement of his *ātman*, so that he feels "my (senses) such as the sense of hearing work upon (the elements) such as the air; my voice etc. upon speech etc.; what has all this to do with me? And in his non-action, that is, inaction such as worship etc. performed by other conscious agents, he generates (his) action (*karma*) in their activity of worship, realizing, "I am identical with all these agents," on the basis of what the adept (*siddha*) has said:

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39 W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 105, fn. 4.
40 Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

"Worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship-acts of (all) worshippers." Such a person alone is wise among ordinary men. He alone may perform any action because he sees the agent is (only) the body and the senses and sees that his *ātman* is wholly without action. It was by identifying himself with other agents that the venerable Somānanda stated: "I am not pleased by (my) performance of worship; nor am I distressed by my non-performance. Worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship-acts of (all) worshippers."[41]

It must be pointed out here that such an interpretation of these verses seems to be characteristic of the Śaiva commentaries of the Bhagavadgītā composed in Kashmir. From Abhinavagupta's reference to Somānanda and the evidence of commentaries which preceded him, it is likely that Abhinavagupta is continuing rather than originating this line of interpretation. Another commentator, Ānanda, carries this line of argument to *its* logical but rather fantastic conclusion in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā V.15.[42] Shripad Krishna Belvalkar describes his position thus:

The mumukṣu or the yogin endeavouring thus to hasten the process of achieving the *summum bonum* does not bother himself as to what body he chooses to reanimate — whether it is that of a pious Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a dog-eater — provided it helps him to live out the ensuants of his past karmans. In this way it will be seen that in the production of the ultimate end — emancipation — Yoga in its more mystic and even weird aspects and practices is given by our Commentator an altogether disproportionate emphasis, which of course fully accounts for the several wholesale quotations from the Yogasūtras and from the Vyāsa-bhāṣya thereon, which take up pages after pages of the Ānandavardhinī. Śaivite Tantrism, as we know, played a distinctive role in Kashmir from the tenth century onwards.[43]

Abhinavagupta, however, does not carry the argument to such a conclusion, as becomes clear from a consideration of his gloss on Bhagavadgītā V.15, which will be taken up later.

Another verse in the Fourth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā in which Abhinavagupta attempts a rather unusual explanation is in his gloss on verse 25 which runs as follows:

daivam evāpare yajñaṁ
yoginaḥ paryupāsate

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-205.
[42] Shripad Krishna Belvalkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 91-99.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 11. He also adds: "The Jñāneśvarī, the Mahārāṣṭra saints' well-known commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, affords a parallel in this matter" (*ibid.*, fn. 2).

brahmāgnāv apare yajñaṁ
yajñenaivo 'pajuhvati[44]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

To naught but sacrifice to the deities some
Disciplined men devote themselves.
In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman, others the sacrifice
Offer up by the sacrifice itself.[45]

It is Abhinavagupta's etymological explanation of the word *daivam* and the interpretation of the rest of the passage in its light which is of supreme interest here. The word *daivam* is normally derived from the root *div*, "to shine."[46] But Abhinavagupta writes:

Others, practising self-restraint, observe (*parita upāsate*) a sacrifice in their cognition of objects by making use of *daivāni* i.e. the senses, [*daiva* being derived from *div*, to play, to sport and so meaning] "characterized by playful enjoyments" [i.e., the senses]. Examining this cognition-sacrifice down to its roots, they realize their true nature. They are termed Yogins for this reason, viz., that they are always possessed of *yoga*, this suffix [-*in* being added to *yoga*] in the sense of constant attachment. Others offer this sacrifice of cognizing objects by a sacrifice of the same sort into the fire of *brahman* which can be satiated.
Such is the interpretation of some. But as the sage (Vyāsa) does not contradict himself [as the above interpretation would have him do], we shall explain what he had in mind. Some possessed of *yoga*, perform a *daivaṁ* sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice of external objects, called *daiva* because it is addressed to the various deities that govern the senses. And since while performing this sacrifice they look to no reward but are guided only by the belief that it should be performed, it is said that they offer this sacrifice into the insatiable fire of *brahman*. Accordingly, those of the *daiva* sacrifice also go to *brahma*. Hence the sage will say [Gītā V.30] "all these are knowers of the sacrifice." So also the Vedas "the gods performed sacrifice with sacrifice" [R.V. X.90.16].[47]

At least three aspects of this passage deserve attention, which shed light on the methods Abhinavagupta uses and the conclusions he draws by applying his methods. First of all one may consider the etymological aspect. Innovative etymologizing as a commentarial device

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[44] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[45] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[46] Vaman Shivram Apte, *op. cit.*, pp. 498, 509, 512; but also see William Dwight Whitney, *op. cit.*, p. 459 para. 1209j.

[47] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 220-222.

is a standard technique employed by Indian exegetes. Śaṅkara uses it, for instance, to explain *aśvattha*, in Bhagavadgītā XV.1 as *na śvo'pi sthātā*! Abhinavagupta here uses the word *daivam* to obtain the sense of *indriyas*. The word *daivaḥ* occurs in Bhagavadgītā XVI.6, *daivam* in IV.25 and XVIII.14 and *daivī* in VII.14 and XVI.3.5. In XVI.6 Abhinavagupta interprets *daivaḥ* in the sense of "divine," in XVIII.14 he takes *daivam* to mean "(*karmic*) merit and demerit earned earlier on (in previous lives)." In his gloss on VII.14 Abhinavagupta seems to be drawing again on the etymology suggested in IV.25 when he remarks: "*Deva* means one who plays, activity originating therein is *daivī* or divine — it is mine, this is what is meant." The occurrence of the word in XVII.3 and 5 is not even glossed. It may be pointed out that in his penchant to derive *deva* from *div*, meaning to play, Abhinavagupta is reflecting a classical etymological bias.

After suggesting a suitable etymological derivation, Abhinavagupta next employs another favourite commentarial device of Indian exegetes. He takes the possessive suffix in *yogin*, which is capable of being taken in several senses, in the sense of *nitya-yoga* or constant attachment. Pāṇini himself does not mention this sense, it is given by Patañjali on Pāṇini 5.2.94 as one of the senses of *matup* (possessive) suffixes.

With etymology and grammar having thus been pressed into service, Abhinavagupta takes the final step and internalizes the process of sacrifice in his exegesis.

In the Fifth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā also one encounters some unusual glosses by Abhinavagupta. One of these is on the 18th verse of the chapter, referred to earlier. It runs:

> vidyāvinayasaṁpanne
> brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
> śuni caiva śvapāke ca
> paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ[48]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

> In a knowledge-and-cultivation-perfected
> Brahman, a cow, an elephant,
> And in a mere dog, and an outcaste,
> The wise see the same thing.[49]

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[48] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[49] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

This is one of the more popular verses of the Gītā, its current popularity perhaps reflecting the egalitarian temper of our own times. It was invoked by Mahatma Gandhi in his fight against untouchability:

> My views on untouchability are not the product of my Western education. I had formed them long before I went to England, and long before I studied the scriptures, and in an atmosphere which was by no means favourable to those views. For I was born in an orthodox Vaishnava family and yet ever since I reached the year of discretion I have firmly held my uncompromising views in the matter, which later comparative study of Hinduism and experience have only confirmed. How in face of the fact that no scriptual text mentions a fifth *varna*, and *in face of the express injunction of the Gita to regard a Brahmana and a bhangi as equals*, we persist in maintaining this deep blot on Hinduism, I cannot understand. Regarding a *brahmana* and a *bhangi* as equals does not mean that you will not accord to a true *brahmana* the reverence that is due to him, but that the *brahmana* and the *bhangi* are equally entitled to our service, that we accord to the *bhangi* the same rights of sending his children to public schools, of visiting public temples, of the use of public wells, etc., on the same basis as these rights are enjoyed by any other Hindu.[49a]

But that the egalitarian thrust of this verse was not overlooked by other readers of the Gītā long before Mahatma Gandhi is clear from the following remarks of Albīrūnī, the Muslim savant of the eleventh century:

> All these things originate in the difference of the classes or castes, one set of people treating the others as fools. This apart, all men are equal to each other, as Vāsudeva says regarding him who seeks salvation: "In the judgment of the intelligent man, the Brahman and the Caṇḍāla are equal, the friend and the foe, the faithful and the deceitful, nay, even the serpent and the weasel. If to the eyes of intelligence all things are equal, to ignorance they appear as separated and different."[49b]

By contrast Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja interpret the verse not so much in terms of social equality as in terms of Brahman's homogeneity or the identity of the various *puruṣas*. Śaṅkara writes that by a *vidyāvinayasampanna brāhmaṇa* is meant a Brāhmaṇa who is both learned and restrained and that the sage sees the self-name Brahman in him as well as in a cow, elephant, dog and outcaste.[50]

49a Mahatma Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma* [Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1950], p. 280, emphasis added.

49b Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1964 [First Indian Reprint]), Vol. II, pp. 137-138.

50 *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa* 8, pp. 144-145.

Rāmānuja takes the verse to mean that the various souls are the same, the standard Sāṅkhyan position that there exists a plurality of *puruṣas* who are all alike in being units of pure consciousness. Thus for Rāmānuja this verse teaches the equality of the *ātmans*:

> He who knows the proper form of the ātman will see the same form in the ātmans of all the creatures — however dissimilar these creatures may appear — because all ātmans have only one form — knowledge. Inequality is of the prakṛti, not of the ātman. Consequently one will perceive that the ātmans are the same in all creatures, because all have the same form, knowledge.[51]

It is in this background of the bifurcation of the interpretation of the verse along social lines on the one hand and metaphysical lines on the other that Abhinavagupta appears to take a curious position, as also on some other points. He writes:

> In order to say that such is the state of those whose ignorance has been annihilated (the Lord) says the verse beginning with *vidyā* etc. Thus those Yogins who do not think regarding the *brāhmaṇa* that by service etc. (of the *brāhmaṇa*) I will earn spiritual merit etc., regarding the cow that it bestows holiness etc., regarding the elephant they do not think of its value etc., regarding the dog they are not concerned with the removal of impurity, regarding the outcaste they are not exercised over his sinfulness, lack of purity, etc. Thus do they regard all equally, but do not act thus (so far as worldly conduct is concerned).[52]

The sting lies in the tail. Abhinavagupta remarks: *ata eva samaṁ paśyantīti na tu vyavaharanti.* In other words, Abhinavagupta interprets this verse in terms of the two levels of truth — *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika*. One might have expected this of Śaṅkara, but the expectation is fulfilled by Abhinavagupta.

Another verse in glossing which Abhinavagupta surprises the reader is Bhagavadgītā V.27:

> sparśān krtvā bahir bāhyāṁś
> cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ
> prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā
> nāsābhyantaracāriṇau[53]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

[51] J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
[52] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 265-266.

Putting out outside contacts,
And fixing the sight between the eye-brows,
Making even the upper and nether breaths,
As they pass through the nose;[54]

The verse describes the way in which the sage bent on final release obtains it through meditation. There is a similar verse in the Eighth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā (VIII.10) which runs:

prayāṇakāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak
sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣam upaiti divyam[55]

Now whether one accepts Abhinavagupta's interpretation or not it must be granted that his exegesis of these two verses is consistent. He glosses V.27 as follows:

> Now the verse beginning *sparśān*. Casting off the external (sense) impressions: that is to say, not accepting them; having placed all the senses, here indicated by the (use of the word) 'eye,' between the right and the left eyebrow, that is to say, in a special state (lit. place) free from anger and attachment; having established the *prāṇa* and the *apāna*, that is, *dharma* and *adharma* evenly in the centre of the mind, let him thus sit. The word *nāsā* means the mind, because the mind acts crookedly (*nasate*), without equanimity, under the influence of anger, etc. Just this on the outside.[56]

This may be compared with Abhinavagupta's gloss on Bhagavadgītā VIII.10:

> Now the verse beginning *prayāṇa*. "In between the eyebrows" has to be understood as before.[57]

Thus one is referred to V.27, and to the peculiar features of its interpretation, which are

(1) placing the eye between the eyebrows really refers metaphorically, according to Abhinavagupta, to the attainment of a state of pacification of all the senses;

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53 V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 137.
54 Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
55 V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 146.
56 Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 277-278, 280.
57 *Ibid.*, p. 390.

(2) *prāṇa* and *apāna* do not really stand for in-or-out-breaths but for *dharma* and *adharma*;

(3) the word *nāsā* in *nāsābhyantaracāriṇau* really stands not for the nose and the movement of the breath through the nasal passages but for the mind and the equalization of *dharma* and *adharma*.

This interpretation of the verse must be regarded as far-fetched. One can see how far Abhinavagupta stands from the more traditional position which regards this *śloka* as "bearing reference to *dhyānayoga*, a description of which with its eight limbs may be found in the Yogasūtras."[58] Even according to Abhinavagupta these verses would refer to *dhyānayoga*; it is in the detailed interpretation of the verse, not in its overall orientation of the interpretation, that Abhinavagupta departs from tradition.

It has been shown earlier how some of the interpretations of the verses of the Gītā offered by Abhinavagupta are curious, even outrageous perhaps at times, so different are they from the common explanations. In any case, they are often unusual and at times extraordinary. But when it comes to his interpretation of Bhagavadgītā VII.11 Abhinavagupta departs from the established tradition so radically that his interpretation is perhaps best described as nothing short of revolutionary.

The verse runs as follows:

balaṁ balavatāṁ cāhaṁ
  kāmarāgavivarjitaṁ
dharmāviruddho bhūteṣu
  kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha[59]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Might of the mighty am I, too,
  (Such as is) free from desire and passion;
(So far as it is) not inconsistent with right, in creatures
  I am desire, O best of Bharatas[60]

It is the second line of this verse which detains us here. I will first try to demonstrate the degree of uniformity with which this line has been interpreted within the Hindu tradition to indicate how radical a break Abhinavagupta makes with it. Śaṅkara glosses the verse thus:

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[58] W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[59] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 143.

[60] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Passion (Kāma): thirst for objects not present to the senses. *Attachment* (rāga): love for those presented to the senses. I am that energy which is necessary for the bare sustenance of the body, certainly not that which causes thirst and attachment (for sense-objects) in the case of worldly mortals. So I am the desire not opposed to the teaching of the scriptures: I am, for instance, the desire for that much of eating and drinking, etc., which is necessary for the bare sustenance of the body.[61]

Not only Śaṅkara but the entire Hindu exegetical tradition has consistently interpreted the second line to mean what it so obviously seems to mean: "in beings I am desire forbidden not by law, O prince of Bharatas."[62] And understood in this sense this hemistich has played a very important role in Hindu axiology as it legitimizes the *puruṣārtha* of *kāma* so long as it is subordinated to *dharma*. Thus it is pointed out that "In a well-known passage, the Bhagavadgītā (7.11) makes the Lord identify Himself with such desire (kāma) as is consistent with dharma. The Hindu ideal does not preach abstinence from pleasures for all or at all stages, it rather preaches, universally, the ideal of chastened love, or pleasure regulated by considerations of both morality and material well-being."[63] Similarly, T. M. P. Mahadevan, in his discussion on the scheme of values in Hinduism remarks:

The normal man has his desires, and he seeks pleasure in the objects of sense. The passions are an integral part of his nature, and there must be channels through which they may flow. The world would be a dull affair without its dance and music, sport and recreation, connubial love and filial affection. Indian thought does not attempt to suppress the desires and emotions that well up from the human heart. On the contrary, its purpose is to let them flow within bounds and so canalize them that through them one may reach higher levels of experience. Marriage and the founding of a family are helpful in that they make the individual less egocentric and assist in the process of sublimating his desires. Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* says: "I am pleasure (*kāma*) that is not opposed to goodness (*dharma*)."[64]

M. Hiriyanna uses this line from the Bhagavadgītā perhaps even more cogently to clinch this point. He asks:

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[61] A. Mahādeva Śāstrī, trad., *op. cit.*, p. 212.

[62] W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[63] Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol. I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 207-208.

[64] Charles A. Moore, ed., *The Indian Mind* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), p. 155.

> What is the relation of *dharma* to *artha* and *kāma*? Or, as *artha* is ordinarily but a means to *kāma*, we may narrow the scope of our question and ask: What is the relation of *dharma* to *kāma*? If *kāma* stands for pleasure, as stated above, we may say that it is desired by all, for pleasure is always welcome to every one. Indeed, we cannot help desiring our own felicity. But not every thing desired is necessarily *desirable*. A sick person may long for a certain kind of food, but it may not at all be advisable for him to partake of it from the standpoint of his physical well-being. That is, *kāma*, while it may be an object of desire, may not always be desirable; and, though appearing to be a true value of life, it may not really be so or may even prove to be a disvalue. How then can we distinguish between these two kinds of *kāma*? To speak with reference only to the *tri-varga* which we are now considering, *dharma* furnishes the necessary criterion. That variety of *kāma* is a true value, which is in accord with the requirements of *dharma*, but not any other. In thus helping us to discriminate between good and bad *kāma* or in rationalising it, as we might put it, consists the superiority of *dharma*; and it is accordingly reckoned as the highest of the three values. This conception of *dharma* as a regulative principle is so important in the philosophy of conduct that all the *śāstras* and all the higher literature of India (the latter, though only implied) emphasise it. That is, for example, what Sri Krishna means when he says in the Gita: *Dharmāviruddhaḥ kāmo'smi*: 'I am *kāma*, not at strife with *dharma*.'[65]

Similarly, P.V. Kane observes that "The experience of sexual life and other pleasures not opposed to righteousness was not condemned by Manu and other Śāstras and in the Bhagavadgītā (VII.11) Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies himself with Kāma that is not in opposition to righteousness."[66]

For the reader accustomed to the obvious meaning of Bhagavadgītā VII.11cd; so obvious that Rāmānuja does not even care to comment on the verse, Abhinavagupta has a shock in store. He writes:

> By "strength devoid of desire and passion" is meant (strength) in the form of energy capable of sustaining everything. By Kāma is meant desire only in the form of consciousness, which does not conflict with substances in the form of pot, cloth, etc. Desire, indeed, on account of the power of the Lord, spreads everywhere, is obstructed nowhere, and is refracted by adventitious *dharmas* such as pot, cloth, etc. By worshipping it (there comes about) the *jñānin*'s (realization) of the nature of pure consciousness. It is said in the Śivopaniṣad: "Place your mind in desire or in arisen knowledge." As soon as it arises, not (after) it has spread outside — that

[65] M. Hiriyanna, *The Quest After Perfection* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1952), pp. 104-105.

[66] P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. V (Part II) (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1962), p. 1511.

is what is meant. Those who, abandoning this explanation explain the intent (of the verse) as (stating that) resort to *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* in a harmonious way — they are to be avoided as expounding the divine secret without knowing the (esoteric interpretation received through the) apostolic succession of the sect.[67]

The passage is remarkable for its forthright attack on those who interpret the word *kāma* here as belonging to the triad or tetrad of the *puruṣārthas*. Abhinavagupta's statement of their position that the verse implies the harmonious pursuit of the three arms of life (*ye parasparānupaghātakaṁ trivargaṁ sevante*)[68] is distinctly reminiscent of Kāmasutra 1.2.1: *parasparasya anupaghātakaṁ trivargaṁ seveta*. In this context it is pertinent that Abhinavagupta refuses to accept a negative connotation of the word *kāma* even in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā III.43 wherein it is universally accepted that the word *kāma* is referred to as a foe to be overcome.[69] Moreover, even in his gloss on III.37 wherein both *kāma* and *krodha* are singled out, he fights an exegetical battle to place the entire blame on *krodha* as far as possible.[70] Abhinavagupta's interpretation of *kāma* there and here must be regarded as truly extraordinary.[71]

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[67] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 354-355.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

[71] It is, however, not entirely indefensible, as the preceding verses are cosmological and Abhinavagupta is clearly trying to interpret *kāma* here in a cosmological sense. Nevertheless, even S. K. Belvalkar, who clearly recognizes the cosmological character of the context ends up with the traditional interpretation: "The latter half of stanza vii.10 and st. 11 introduce a slightly different topic, not altogether unconnected with cosmology. While, in what had gone before, it was stated and clearly demonstrated how God has created all this diversified creation, the point now to be made is that there are certain happenings in the Creation for which God does not wish to hold himself primarily responsible. Since God has granted man the freedom of the will, God is not, for instance, expected to assume primary responsibility for such aspects and happenings in the Creation as are the results of the perverse exercise by the individuals of their own God-given freedom of the will. This perverseness which man at times exhibits is the consequence of man's own unbridled cravings and passions, which lead him to acts which cannot be said to be God-inspired. It is the sane and self-controlled acts illumined by the dry light of reason that can be legitimately attributed to God. The adjective kāmarāgavivarjitam at the end of st. 11ab is generally associated with the noun balam alone after which it is placed. It seems to me legitimate to take it also with tejas and buddhi (in the latter case with the permissible change of gender). The kāmarāgavivarjita exercise of the three powers rational, spiritual and physical emanates from God and is approved by Him. Passion (kāma) itself, in so far as it serves as a handmaid to Dharma, is God-inspired, is Godhood itself," S. K. Belvalkar, Two Mishandled Passages from the Bhagavadgītā, in N. Sivaram Sastry and G. Hanumantha Rao, eds., *Prof. M. Hiriyanna Commemoration Volume* (Mysore: 1952), pp. 10-11.

Abhinavagupta does not offer so radical a break from the accepted interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā in the Eighth Chapter as he has done in some of his glosses on the verses of the Seventh Chapter. On the contrary, he is very traditional in his interpretation of Bhagavadgītā VIII.5-6. Herein the extraordinary aspect of the situation lies not in the extent to which Abhinavagupta departs from the traditional interpretation but rather in the thoroughness with which he supports it. Bhagavadgītā VIII.5-6 run as follows:

antakāle ca mām eva
    smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṁ
    yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ
yaṁ-yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ
    tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ-tam evaiti kaunteya
    sadā tabhāvabhāvitaḥ[72]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

And at the hour of death, on Me alone
    Meditating, leaving the body
Whoso dies, to My estate he
    Goes; there is no doubt of that.
Whatsoever state (of being) meditating upon
    He leaves the body at death,
To just that he goes, son of Kunti,
    Always, being made to be in the condition of that.[73]

Now as Douglas P. Hill has pointed out,

> Commentators claim that this is not a doctrine of "death-bed repentance," but that a man will naturally turn at the last hour to the object of his life-long devotion. Rāmānuja refers to the story of Ādi-bharata, told in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa; at the moment of death his mind was wholly occupied with a beloved deer, he was therefore born again as a deer in the forest.[74]

The point, of course, is that Ādibharata was not born as a deer just because by sheer accident the thought of a deer happened to cross his mind at the time of his death but rather because of his

[72] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 146.
[73] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[74] W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 133, fn. 6.

attachment to the deer the last thought to arise in his mind was that of the deer which led to his rebirth as one. Thus it is what a man has been or has done all his life which really determines his rebirth and not some chance happening at the moment of his death. This fact is emphasized at considerable length by Abhinavagupta. He writes:

Now the remaining question — 'how are you to be known at the time of death' — is settled [in the verse] beginning with *antakāle'pi* and ending with *asaṁśayaṁ*.[75] Not only, indeed, does one come to me — the vanquisher of all ailments — (thinking of me) at the time of death when one is in good health; but (the Lord) also preaches the way whereby God may be remembered by one even in bad health, (by one) who has withdrawn himself from all the activities of the senses. He, from whose heart the divine truth is never lost even in the course of all worldly pursuits, who has cast off all actions on the Lord and who is ever suffused with God, he definitely automatically remembers the divine essence (at the time of death) — and the reason for this is that he is always steeped in it. Therefore it is said that with whatever thing the innermost self is always filled, that is remembered at the time of death and that state is attained; therefore at all times be devoted to me, be desirous of me; this is the import, and not this that whatever is remembered at the time of death (i.e. whatever thought crosses the mind) that forsooth is obtained. If this be so then the prospect is indeed bleak even for the *jñānin* whose mind may be disturbed by the disorder of bodily humours and who is comatose (at the time of death). Nor is logical deduction in order here; because of its opposition to the *śruti* which is authoritative. There is (for instance the following statement): "One who has overcome sorrow attains liberation even if his memory fail him, while he is dying, be it at a sacred place or in the house of an outcaste, for he was liberated simultaneously with (the acquisition of) *jñāna*." [There is the further statement:] "He may give up his body in Kāśī or in the house of an outcaste. He, whose (*sāṁsāric*) fever is over, was liberated at the time of the attainment of *jñāna*." Hence two endorsements such as these. That with which the heart is always informed, in the end, after death, that indeed is attained. This is not conditional on whether it is remembered or not (at the exact moment of death). This primary meaning has been indicated by the use of (the particle) *api*. In (the expression)—*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi*—the word *vā* expresses the idea that memory need not always be present. A person who is always devoted to me may abide in any way — the sage himself makes this sense manifest.[76]

Abhinavagupta continues the same trend of thought in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā VII.7. Indeed, as he indicates at the beginning of his

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[75] The Kāśmīrī recension reads *antakāle'pi* for the vulgate *antakāle ca*.

[76] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 381-384.

gloss on VIII.5, he treats VIII.5-7 as one unit. Bhagavadgītā VIII.7 runs as follows:

tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu
    mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpitamanobuddhir
    mām evaiṣyasy asaṁśayaḥ[77]

Abhinavagupta glosses the verse thus:

The connection between what has been said, with [the verse beginning with] *tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara* is as follows: Thinking constantly of whatever thought one gives up the body, one attains to that, whether one remembers it at the last moment or does not remember it because it could not be remembered. Because he is always full of that thought. Others, however (interpret the verse thus): the form he assumes is the first mental impression he forms, which is what he remembers at what is called the moment of death, when relatives, sons, etc., and other subjects can be seen, when symptoms such as heavy breathing, hiccups, choking etc., prognose the end, and when one is deluded by (alternating) signs of relief and distress caused by the emaciation of the firm frame of the body. At such a moment the cause for arising of the memory (of God) is always having been filled with His thought. The proper form of *tyajati* is locative (and not third person present indicative) otherwise the meaning is the same as before. Then what is the point in remembering at the last moment indeed? Who says so, that it is of any use. Is it that at the last moment only that happens which is circumstantial? Indeed, then, if at the last moment the drink of cold water, etc., fetched by son, wife or relative is seen and remembered then one may become that! Not so. By last moment is not meant the moment of obvious physical demise. The last moment we wish to talk of is not the kind seen by you all (on the outside). At that last moment, whatever (mental) form ought to be will come to be by the logic that even a remote mental impression, even in the case of those obscured by time and space, will be regained on account of belonging to the innermost nature. Under its influence memory (will arise) and through that memory that (appropriate) condition will be attained. With some even when the body is in good-health, the same happens accidentally as is described in the *purāṇa* about the deer etc., and the consequent assumption of the body of a deer.[78] Therefore "even at the time of death (remember) me" etc., is stated. Those who constantly honour God and (say) "so it has been and so will it be with us" — this mental impression of theirs prevents other mental impressions (from arising). By this, in that internal state not outwardly known, by the removal of other

[77] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 146.

[78] This reference is to the story of the deer mentioned earlier as occurring in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Also see Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Canto 5, Chapter 8.

mental impressions one remembers the essence (of God) on account of the mental impression. And after the remembrance, for the sake of obtaining a proper condition for the body, follows the moment of the dissolution of the body. The mental impression of time done away with, from the disappearance of the distinctions, "this is to be known" etc., one becomes merged with the Lord who is of the nature of consciousness alone. This is the considered opinion of the guru of Abhinavagupta; more need not be said. By *asaṁśayaṁ*[79] is meant that no doubt need be entertained in this respect.[80]

Two additional remarks seem to be called for as one moves on to the other glosses of Abhinavagupta. The first has to do with the remark with which Abhinavagupta introduces his gloss on Bhagavadgītā VIII.5, wherein he refers to the remaining question (*avaśiṣṭaḥ praśnaḥ*).[81] According to Abhinavagupta, in Bhagavadgītā VIII.1-2 Arjuna raises nine questions.[82] These verses run as follows:

kiṁ tad brahma kim adhyātmaṁ
  kiṁ karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktam
  adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate
adhiyajñaḥ kathaṁ ko 'tra
  dehe 'smin madhusūdana
prayāṇakāle ca kathaṁ
  jñeyo 'si niyatāmabhiḥ[83]

The questions, according to Abhinavagupta, appear to be:

(1) What is *brahman*?
(2) What is *adhyātma*?
(3) What is *karma*?
(4) What is *adhibhūta*?
(5) What is *adhidaiva*?
(6) What is *adhiyajña*?
(7) How is it known?
(8) How is it present in the body, and
(9) How is it to be known by the self-controlled ones when death is imminent?

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[79] The Kāśmīrī recension reads *asaṁśayaṁ* for the vulgate *asaṁśayaḥ*.
[80] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 381.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 377.
[83] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

According to Abhinavagupta verses five through seven of the Eighth Chapter are meant to answer the ninth question. This tendency to set up a series of questions on the basis of the text and to answer them on its basis is characteristic of Abhinavagupta. He does the same with Bhagavadgītā II.54 for instance.[84]

The second comment relates to the way in which he concludes his gloss on Bhagavadgītā VIII.7, by appealing to the authority of his *guru*.[85] This seems to be a special feature of Abhinavagupta's commentary, indeed, one of which he is himself conscious as he has set out to expound the esoteric significance (*gūḍhārtha*) of the text and the esoteric meaning is believed to be received in apostolic succession.

In the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā as well Abhinavagupta offers a novel and extremely liberal interpretation of the expression *avidhipūrvakam* in Bhagavadgītā IX.23. For a fuller explanation the succeeding verse also needs to be considered. The two verses run thus:

ye 'py anyadevatābhaktā
 yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya
 yajanty avidhipūrvakam
ahaṁ hi sarvayajñānām
 bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca
na tu mām abhijānanti
 tattvenātaś cyavanti te[86]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Even those who are devotees of other gods,
 And worship them permeated with faith,
It is only Me, son of Kuntī, that even they
 Worship, (to) not in the enjoined fashion.
For I of all acts of worship
 Am both the recipient and the Lord;
But they do not recognize Me
 In the true way, therefore they fall (from the 'heaven' [they win).[87]

[84] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.
[85] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385.
[86] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 151.
[87] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Almost all commentators and translators of the Bhagavadgītā, ancient and modern, take the word *avidhi* as implying a mode of worship not properly ordained. Thus Śaṅkara comments: *avidhiḥ ajñānam tatpūrvakam.*[88] And Rāmānuja has a fairly extended gloss on the point which J. A. B. van Buitenen paraphrases as follows, in which he also takes the succeeding verse into account:

> The ignorant, however, are devoted to mere divinities and so rely on the Vedas alone and faithfully sacrifice to these divinities. But while doing so they actually sacrifice to God himself, for everything constitutes God's body and as God is the ātman of everyone and everything, He may be called by the names of these divinities. But the ignorant perform their sacrifices without connecting them with the words of the Vedānta. As has been stated before, the entire Vedānta lays down the doctrine that the divinities are to be worshipped in so far as they constitute the body of the Supreme Person, but that it actually is the Supreme Person himself who is the one to be worshipped, because He is their ātman. When performing their sacrifices the four hotṛs will find fulfilment of their desires via the divinities — who constitute God's body — in God who is the inner ruler of these divinities; or, in other words, when they know that by their acts they pay homage to God himself and then perform these acts — serving to reconcile the divinities — they will find in God the perfect fulfilment of their aspirations. The ignorant, however, do not know this, so their reward is but a small one and it is in their nature to fall back to saṃsāra.[89]

Some modern commentators on the Bhagavadgītā, perhaps under the influence of the prevailing view which highlights Hindu tolerance, take a soft approach to the issue and handle the verse with kid gloves as it were. Thus R. C. Zaehner renders *avidhi* as rites that "may differ from the norm."[90] And S. Radhakrishnan remarks on this verse:

> The author of the Gītā welcomes light from every quarter of the heaven. It has a right to shine because it is light.[91]

A little later he further comments:

> The shining gods, the spirits of the dead and the spirits in the psychic world all happen to be worshipped by men in different stages of development but they are all limited forms of the Supreme and cannot give the aspiring soul the peace that is beyond all understanding. The result of

[88] *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa* 8, p. 227.
[89] J. A. B. van Buitenen, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.
[90] R. C. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 282.
[91] S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

worship is assimilation to the form worshipped and these limited forms give limited results. No devotion fails of its highest reward. The lesser ones bring lesser rewards while devotion to the Supreme brings the supreme reward. All sincere religious devotion is a seeking after the Supreme Godhead.[92]

An extraordinary feature of Abhinavagupta's commentary is that his approach is quite modern on this point if one may say so; for he declines to take the word *avidhi* to mean *wrong* or *improper* rites and insists that the word stands for different rites. Thus in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IX.23 he takes *avidhi* to mean not an "improper" rite but rather as one involving duality:

> Those who worship through other names [and forms], they also worship me alone. There is nothing to be worshipped other than the *brahman* — but the special thing (about their situation is that it is done) 'without the proper rite (*vidhi*).' 'Without the proper *vidhi*' means with another *vidhi* (or mode of worship). By rites of various kinds I, who have the same nature of being as the supreme *brahman*, am indeed to be worshipped. [The word *avidhi* is not to be understood] as it has been explained by others, who are sullied by terrible sins produced by the defects (arising from their being) of a different school of philosophy (who maintain) that by '*avidhi*' is meant 'bad or wicked rites.' If this be so then statements such as "they worship me alone,"[93] "I am the enjoyer of the sacrifice"[94] plainly cannot be reconciled; so enough of bandying words with those full of sin. Our *guru* rather explains thus. [Those who] worship some other god as different from one's *ātman*, as devoid of the nature of *brahman* on account of dualism — in reality, they worship me who is of the nature of one's own *ātman*, but "without the proper rite," with a "bad rite," i.e. by adopting a form implying duality. Therefore it is said: they do not know me really as of the nature of one's own *ātman* (but) as the partaker (of the worship) on account of the form of the god (they worship). Therefore do they fall away from me.[95]

Elsewhere too, in the Ninth Chapter, Abhinavagupta evinces a remarkably liberal spirit, this time in his interpretation of Bhagavadgītā IX.32.33:

> māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya
> ye 'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ
> striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās
> te 'pi yānti parāṁ gatim

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[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Bhagavadgītā IX.23.
[94] Bhagavadgītā IX.24.
[95] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 432-433.

kiṁ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā
    bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā
anityam asukhaṁ lokam
    imaṁ prāpya bhajasva mām[96]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

For if they take refuge in Me, son of Pṛthā,
    Even those who may be of base origin,
Women, men of the artisan class, and serfs too,
    Even they go to the highest goal.
How much more virtuous brahmans,
    And devout royal seers, too!
A fleeting and joyless world
    This; having attained it, devote thyself to Me.[97]

To see the extent to which Abhinavagupta liberalizes the interpretation of these verses, it is useful to present first the rather narrow interpretation of these verses Abhinavagupta alludes to as espoused by some scholars. One such scholar is Bhāskara though we do not know whether Abhinavagupta had him in mind or not. Bhāskara writes in his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā:

> It is forbidden to impart to the Śūdra, etc., knowledge of unseen things, to instruct him in *dharma* and the like. Besides, when a Śūdra, out of his own foolish desire, bypasses the instruction by Brahmans and either from a written text or from a commentary thereon learns its import and performs the rites, the rites he performs will not be of any benefit to him. On the contrary, the knowledge acquired by one who is forbidden it and who is not initiated only creates distress for him. ... Since the higher and the lower classes are not equal, they likewise do not have the same *dharma*. As has been said, "If women and the Śūdras were qualified for release, the caste eminence of the Brahman would serve no purpose." ... The norm of good conduct in the land of the Āryans is conveyed solely by the Brahman's action. ... In the line "wisdom, knowledge and orthodoxy are the natural functions of the Brahman," our text will demonstrate that the Blessed *dharma* is only for Brahmans a way to Release. [Not typical, his expression *bhagavān dharmaḥ*!] The Śūdra, etc., cannot be elevated ... nor can iron be made into gold by heating it some more. ... Even the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya do not have the same qualification for release as the Brahman. Therefore, only the Brahman has it. No release is possible for Śūdras, no more than it is for animals. ... Since the Śūdra etc., have

[96] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 152.
[97] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

no release and lack qualification for the three pursuits of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, which are the goals of man, it follows that they may also not learn the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gītā. ... Just as a bilious man who, in order to cure himself, takes medicine that is intended for a phlegmatic not only fails to be cured, but suffers even worse from the onslaught of his ailment, so indeed is it in the case of Śūdras, etc.[98]

Abhinavagupta criticizes this position in the strongest possible terms in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IX.32.33:

Now the verse begining *māṁ hi*: [In this verse by the expression] *pāpayonayaḥ* ('those born in wicked wombs') are meant animals, birds and reptiles: by *striyaḥ* (women) those that are ignorant, by *vaiśyas* (merchants etc.) those engaged in the occupation of farming etc. and by *śūdras* (serfs etc.) all of those who are excluded from Vedic ritual and dependent on others for a living; even they, resorting to me, worship me indeed. When the (marvellous) deeds of the supremely compassionate God, such as the freeing of the elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile) are heard by the thousand, then what doubt can there be (of the salvation) of those of perverse conduct? Some say that this statement is meant to glorify the *brāhmaṇas* and the *kṣatriyas* and it is not intended to indicate the accessibility of salvation on the part of women etc. They (who say so), denying the all-embracing power of God with their narrow intellects; being unable to bear the supreme kindheartedness of the supreme lord, going against sentences which clearly state the intended meaning such as "I hate none and love none";[99] "even if one be terribly depraved"[100] and others; not accepting, on the strength of dualism, the non-duality of the essence of God established through a host of irrefutable arguments; not noticing other scriptural contradictions (of theirs); joining issue repeatedly 'how can you say this,' 'how can you say this'; with their hearts penetrated and possessed by the supreme prejudice of birth etc., which has been completely accepted; turning askance their lowered face and eyes because of enmity, dissimilation and embarrassment, prating nonsense before all,—make themselves the butt of ridicule among the people—which serves to explain everything in advance![101]

It will be noticed that Abhinavagupta's gloss on some of the verses of the Ninth Chapter considered here are not only remarkable for their liberality but also for their modernity. A striking illustration of this is provided by the fact that Abhinavagupta does not take the

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98 See Milton Singer, ed., *Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), p. 32. This passage has been quoted by Prof. J. A. B. van Buitenen in the above-mentioned book. The translation is his, the relevant chapter and verse of the Gītā to which Bhāskara's gloss belongs have not been cited.

99 See Bhagavadgītā IX.29(b).

100 See Bhagavadgītā IX.30(a).

101 Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 439-441.

expression *striyaḥ* in the Bhagavadgītā IX.32 to mean "women" as almost every commentator and translator does but rather to mean "ignorant men" presumably on the assumption that since women were denied access to Vedic learning, by this expression those labouring under this disability are intended. This is clearly a very modern explanation indeed, one which comes close to the explanation Swami Chinmayananda gave in one of his public lectures that "*striyaḥ*" does not mean women but people, men or women with negative feminine traits.

Abhinavagupta's comments on the Tenth Chapter are not quite extraordinary but nonetheless not entirely lacking in novelty and freshness. Abhinavagupta, taking the cue from the very first *pāda* of the chapter *bhūya eva*, that the chapter involves a re-iteration of what has already been said, comments on it with great economy. As he remarks at the very outset:

> The meaning which has been expressed through the previous nine chapters, that very meaning is elaborated again in this chapter through every metrical foot.[102] And so [the Lord] says [the verse beginning with] *bhūya eva*. Listen to what is being said again to clarify what has already been said. Arjuna will also say likewise, "Tell me again."[103] Such, then, is the purpose of the chapter. The rest has been explained, then why the repetition? For (thereby) doubt will be resolved.[104]

This chapter contains a description of the various *vibhūtis* or marvellous manifestations of the Lord, and Abhinavagupta takes pains to clarify that the singling out of these manifestations does not in any way compromise the unitary nature of the Godhead, a point not usually taken into account in this context. He comments on Bhagavadgītā X.10-42 in a single gloss and says:

> The comment made [now covers the verses] beginning with *teṣām satatayuktānām*[105] till the end of the chapter[106] and should be read (as covering all of them) simultaneously. Now [after the verse beginning with] *teṣām evānu-* (*kampārtham*) [the sage Vyāsa] cites six verses[107] containing the questions of Arjuna. Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks verses ending with [the verse

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[102] Read *pāda* for *pada* in the text.

[103] See Bhagavadgītā X.18.

[104] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 442, 444.

[105] Bhagavadgītā X.10.

[106] Bhagavadgītā X.42.

[107] In the critical edition these are seven, Bhagavadgītā X.12-18, inclusive of both. Among the Kāśmīra recensions Ś6 omits X.15.

beginning with] *athavā bahu*. By [the verse beginning with] *aham ātmā*[108] [He] wards off separateness. Otherwise in statements such as '(among) the mountains I am the Himālayas,' God is Himālaya alone and nothing else (could be assumed)—by such exclusion the unitary vision of *brahman* would have been annulled on account of the absence of indivisibility (of *brahman* which such statements seem to imply). Therefore this lesson is put together for one whose mind cannot grasp that concept of indivisible pervasiveness as such but who wants to know about it. Now, in conclusion, after having expressed the notion of difference-with-non-difference through [the verse containing the expression] *yad-yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ*,[109] (the Lord) concludes with [a note of] non-difference [with the verse[110] which may be paraphrased thus:] *athavā kiṁ bahunaitena viṣṭabhyāham ity ekāṁśena jagat sthitaḥ*.[111] As has been said [in the Puruṣasūkta:] 'A quarter of Him comprises all the creatures; three-fourths of Him is immortal in the sky.'[112] It is for the sake of created beings that all his divine essence, shining forth in various variegated forms, becomes the object of perception.[113]

Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā shares the brevity of his commentary on the Tenth. This is in itself unusual, especially from the point of view of some modern commentaries, who regard this chapter as "the climax of the Gītā."[114] This tradition perhaps goes back to Rudolf Otto who regards the scene in which Kṛṣṇa's cosmic manifestation evokes terror in Arjuna "as an example of the place of the numinous, the *mysterium tremendum* in religion."[115] Even in the course of his brief commentary, however, Abhinavagupta makes some interesting comments and connections.

In XI.18 an epithet is applied to the Lord which in the critical text reads: *śāśvatadharmagoptā*,[116] so also in the vulgate.[117] In the Kāśmīrī recension, however, the text on which Abhinavagupta is commenting, it reads *sātvatadharmagoptā*.[118] This is itself is not surprising but Abhinavagupta's gloss on the term is, as we shall presently

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[108] Bhagavadgītā X.20.

[109] Bhagavadgītā X.41.

[110] Bhagavadgītā X.42.

[111] Why say more? I abide having planted (Myself) with a fraction of Myself in the universe.

[112] Ṛg Veda X.90.3.

[113] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 855, 857, 864, 865.

[114] R. C. Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

[115] S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

[116] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[117] *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa* 8, p. 260.

[118] But not in all Kāśmīrī recensions, see V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 158.

see. But first a few comments on the word *sātvata*. According to S. N. Dasgupta:

> ... the word *Sātvata* also is used as a synonym of Vāsudeva or Bhāgavata. The word *Sātvata* in the plural form is a name of a tribe of the Yādavas, and in the *Mahā-bhārata*, VII.7662, the phrase *Sātvatāṃ varaḥ* is used to denote Sātyaki, a member of the Yādava race, though this appellation is applied to Kṛṣṇa in a large number of places in the *Mahā-bhārata*. In the later *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* (IX.9.50) it is said that the Sātvatas worship Brahman as Bhagavān and as Vāsudeva. In the *Mahā-bhārata*, VI.66.41, Saṃkarṣaṇa is said to have introduced the *sātvata* rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. If Sātvata was the name of a race, it is easy to imagine that the persons may have had special rites in worshipping Vāsudeva. Yāmunācārya, the great teacher of Rāmānuja in the tenth century A.D., says that those who adore God (*bhagavat*), the supreme person, with purity (*sattva*), are called *bhāgavata* and *sātvata*.[119]

Abhinavagupta's interpretation, though not entirely unrelated to Yāmuna's, contains elements of originality. For he remarks:

> Now the verse beginning *tvam akṣaram*: [The word] *sātvatadharmagoptā* [is to be understood thus]. The *Sātvatas* are those who have offered the quality of goodness (*sattva*) — which has the nature of not making the differentiation between the two, *jñāna* and *karma*, appear — to the supreme *guru*, the great god Śiva; and for whom the truth, of the nature of light, shines forever. Their *dharma* is one in which the entire cosmos gets folded up (or destroyed) on account of devotion to the renunciation of incessant grasping, and which surpasses all (other) paths. (Lord Kṛṣṇa) acts as a protector of such a *dharma*. This indeed is the secret purport of this chapter, and one on which light has often been shed by me in (my) *Devīstotravivṛti*. That (secret is such as) is automatically understood by those who are well-instructed and endowed with an understanding heart. What is the point then in being verbosely repetitive about what is obvious.[120]

Abhinavagupta's gloss on Bhagavadgītā XI.33 is also similarly of interest. He reads this verse in the light of Bhagavadgītā II.6 wherein Arjuna wonders "Whether we should conquer, or they should conquer us." The verse runs as follows:

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[119] S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), Vol. II, pp. 541-54. He quotes the following verse from the Āgamaprāmāṇya of Yāmuna:

tataś ca sattvād bhagavān bhajyate yaih paraḥ pumān
te sātvatā bhāgavatā ity ucyante dvijottamaiḥ

Yāmuna's Āgama-prāmāṇya, p. 7.6.

[120] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 457-477; 480.

na caitad vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo
yad vā jayema yadi vā no jayeyuḥ
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ[121]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

And we do not know which of the two were better for us
Whether we should conquer, or they should conquer us;
What every ones having slain we wish not to live,
They are arrayed in front of us, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men.[122]

This verse is not connected by either Śaṅkara[123] or Rāmānuja[124] with the Bhagavadgītā XI.33, which runs:

tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ purvam eva
nimittamātraṁ bhava savyasācin[125]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Therefore arise, thou, win glory,
Conquer thine enemies and enjoy prospered kingship;
By Me Myself they have already been slain long ago:
Be thou the mere instrument, left-handed archer.[126]

Abhinavagupta concludes his gloss on XI.31.33 with the comment:

> Herein, where it was said: 'In respect to these, who have (already) been killed by me, you are the (mere) occasion (for their killing. Therefore kill them and) be victorious'—therein the Lord gave his reply to what Arjuna had asked earlier in the verse beginning with *na caitad vidmaḥ katarat* etc.[127]

As is clear from the entire verse cited above, the question whether the Pāṇḍavas will win or lose is incidental to Arjuna's doubt which is really on a different plane. He does not appear so much concerned with the fact of winning or losing as with the issue: which

[121] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 119.
[122] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[123] *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa* 8, p. 269.
[124] Mahāvana Śāstrī, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 186.
[125] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161.
[126] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[127] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 483, 485.

of the two is better for us, winning or losing? (rather than with the issue: will we win or lose!) So the question seems to have been slightly misconstrued by Abhinavagupta here.

One meets with some extraordinary explanations in Abhinavagupta's Gītārthasaṅgraha next in his glosses on the Thirteenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. What is extraordinary here is not so much Abhinavagupta's own interpretation (though in part it is too) but rather some of the prevailing views he cites. This he does in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XIII.1-2:

idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya
    kṣetram ity abhidhīyate
etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ
    kṣetrajña iti tadvidaḥ
kṣetrajñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi
    sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetrakṣetrajñayor jñānaṁ
    yat taj jñānaṁ mataṁ mama[128]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

This body, son of Kuntī,
    Is called the Field.
Who knows this, he is called
    Field-knower by those who know him.
Know also that I am the Field-knower
    In all Fields, son of Bharata.
Knowledge of the Field and the Field-knower,
    This I hold to be (true) knowledge.[129]

Abhinavagupta comments on these verses, including a third verse found only in some versions of the Gītā. Indeed the first verse commented on by Abhinavagupta in this chapter does not exist in the vulgate or the critical edition of the Bhagavadgītā. It is, however, found in some versions of the Kāśmīra recension of the Bhagavadgītā.[130]

That verse itself comes in two readings. In one it is spoken by Kṛṣṇa,[131] in the other by Arjuna.[132] On the basis of the internal

[128] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.
[129] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[130] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 521.
[131] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

evidence provided by Abhinavagupta in the gloss it is possible to identify the reading he had before him. It seems to have run as follows:

Śrībhagavān uvāca

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva
kṣetraṁ kṣetrajñam eva ca
etat te kathayiṣyāmi
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ ca bhārata

His gloss on this and the rest of the verses runs as follows:

> Somewhere in the Vedas the *kṣetrajña* is heard of as worthy of being worshipped. Is he the *ātman* or God or else some other third entity: suspecting such a question the Lord instructs [through the verse beginning with] *prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ*. For those involved in the process of *saṁsāra*, the body is the field (*kṣetra*), wherein the seed of *karma* sprouts. Therefore their *ātman*, vexed by external defilement, is called 'the knower of the field' (*kṣetrajña*).[133] For the enlightened, that itself is the field. But there is a difference in [etymological] interpretation [to be met with in the case of the word *kṣetrajña* as follows:] The *kṣe* in *kṣetra* may be connected with *kṣiṇoti* (√*kṣi* thus :] that which cuts asunder the bond of *karma* by its dissipation through enjoyment [and the *tra* in *kṣetra* may be connected with *trāyate* (√*trai*) thus :] that which delivers one from the fear of birth and death; for such *ātmans* the supreme soul Vāsudeva is the *kṣetrajña*, that is to say, one who makes such a *kṣetra* known. [But how can one get the sense of "making it known" (*vedayati*) when the form *vetti* means to know (and the word *kṣetrajña* translates as "*knower* of the field"?)] In the root *vid* the causative sense of the suffix (*ṇic*) should be undestood as subsumed.[134] Therefore He, by whose grace, that which is lacking in consciousness acquires the state of consciousness, he indeed is *kṣetrajña* and none else. But as particular and resorting to a form, possessing limited pervesiveness, it is called the *ātman* (i.e. the *jīvātman*). Lord Vāsudeva is the supreme soul on account of pervading all the fields (*kṣetras*) without any distinction. The (genitive) form *mama* is to be understood as an accusative [i.e. the expression *matam mama* does not mean "knowledge about me or opinion about me"[135] but rather that] I am to be known by this knowledge — this is what is meant.[136]

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[133] Read *rūṣitaḥ* for *rūāṣateḥ*(?), Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 524.

[134] See Pāṇini 3.1.26; also Siddhāntakaumudī on Pāṇini 7.1.101, rule 2571 (root No. 1709).

[135] See Pāṇini 2.3.67.

[136] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 521, 524, 526, 532-534.

The etymologies cited by Abhinavagupta are fanciful, though no more than one often meets with in Sanskrit commentarial literature and his own understanding of *mama* as *māṁ*, though making an interesting point, seems a trifle forced.

The Fourteenth Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā deals primarily with the three *guṇas*. Abhinavagupta's glosses on the verses of this chapter share their straightforward, even somewhat pedestrian, character except that sometimes he alternately surprises us with exegetical felicity, followed quickly by etymological "ingenuity." This happens in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XIV.8. The verse runs:

tamas tv ajñānajaṁ viddhi
mohanaṁ sarvadehinām
pramādālasyanidrābhis
tan nibadhnāti bhārata[137]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

But know that darkness is born of ignorance,
The deluder of all embodied (souls);
By heedlessness, sloth, and sleep
It binds, son of Bharata.[138]

Abhinavagupta writes:

Now the verse containing *tamas tu* and *pramādālasya*: Heedlessness (*pramāda*) consists of wasting away human life which is hard to obtain, which is obtained as a result of hundreds of spiritual merits accumulated over a long time and which is the sole cause for achieving salvation. As has been said with reference to the same: "Not a single moment of life (once lost, can be re-)gained by all the wealth in the world (lit. by all the jewels). He who wastes it away is heedless, wretched among men." Or as (has been said) in the Śrīmadbhāgavata: "The night is taken away by sleep, and moreover, life by obstacles. The day, O king, in trying to obtain wealth and in supporting the family. Even though these hosts consisting of the physical body, children, wife etc. are unreal, one who is intoxicated by them, does not see (his) death (close at hand); even though seeing it (i.e. one remains blind to the prospect of his death)." Moreover: "Of what avail here are the numerous years (that stretch out) in the future for a heedless person. Much better the moment at hand which is capable of producing good." [Not heeding that moment—] that is heedlessness. Indeed therein (in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa) in the eleventh canto the Lord

[137] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 170.
[138] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

has declared what is meant by the word suicide thus: "Having first easily obtained this human body hard to obtain, a ship well-designed with the *guru* at the helm and urged on by me with a favourable wind: that man who does not cross over the ocean of *saṁsāra* (given these favourable circumstances) is one who commits suicide." Laziness (*ālasya*) means slackness in performing good deeds. A completely woebegone state is [what is meant by] *nidrā* [by taking the prefix *ni* to stand for *niḥśeṣeṇa* or completely and *drā* to stand for *drāṇam* or a wretched state].[139]

Though Abhinavagupta's glosses on the Fourteenth Chapter may be passed over as not outstanding in general in comparison with other commentaries, the place the Fifteenth Chapter occupies in Abhinavagupta's Gītārthasaṅgraha deserves special mention. The Fifteenth Chapter is one of the shortest in the Bhagavadgītā but it is, comparatively speaking, glossed by Abhinavagupta in more detail than perhaps any other chapter. Moreover, Abhinavagupta sees the Fifteenth Chapter as occupying a special position in the Bhagavadgītā. This is clearly stated and amplified in his gloss on the last verse of that Chapter, i.e., XV.20. The verse runs:

iti guhyatamaṁ śāstram
idam uktaṁ mayānagha
etad buddhvā buddhimān syāt
kṛtakṛtyaś ca bhārata[140]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Thus the most secret science
Has now been declared by Me, blameless one;
Being enlightened as to this, a man would have true [enlightenment,
And would have done all there is to do, son of [Bharata.[141]

Abhinavagupta comments:

Now the verse beginning *iti*: It is most recondite (*guhyatamaṁ*) because it propounds the non-duality of everything. True knowledge consists in knowing things as they are and not (in espousing) a worldly point of view. And through knowing things as they are comes true fulfilment, not with such actions as defeating enemies, obtaining wealth, enjoying women etc.

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[139] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 593-594.
[140] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 175.
[141] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

The particle *ca* is expressive of wonder. Through that (knowledge) is true fulfilment to be had. By this mere knowledge (and no action): this is the great wonder. By the word *iti*, the conclusion of the treatise is indicated. From something being concluded one knows that what was to be said has been fully said. For instance, in the XVI[th] chapter only Arjuna's eligibility (as a receiver of spiritual instruction) is established, nothing is preached. *Daivī* or divine attributes are those which are such (divine) and *āsurī* or demoniac attributes are such as are pervaded by ignorance. You have obtained to the divine attribute, pervaded by knowledge, this much alone is the purport. That he will say [in the verse beginning with] *mā śucaḥ saṁpadaṁ daivīm*.[142] Therefore earlier, through the device of the account of the battle of the gods and the demons at the time of the depiction of the clash of knowledge and ignorance, it was indicated that there is a conflict between knowledge and ignorance. Similarly in explaining things primarily for a disciple, as the occasion required, something else was also said. Hence two (additional) chapters will also come about. The instruction is concluded right here. In every state one should seek intense devotion to God; for achieving that all else has been said earlier. Supreme felicity lies in total devotion to the true nature of God.[143]

Perhaps in view of the importance Abhinavagupta attaches to it, his commentary on the Fifteenth Chapter is more detailed, subtle and difficult. The situation is further complicated by the text which is at times corrupt. Bhagavadgītā XV.3 serves to illustrate the point. The verse runs:

na rūpam asyeha tathopalabhyate
nānto na cādir na ca saṁpratiṣṭhā
aśvattham enaṁ suvirūḍhamūlam
asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā[144]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Its form is not thus comprehended here in the world,
Nor is its end or beginning or basis.
This peepal-tree, with its firmly grown roots,
Cutting with the stout axe of detachment,[145]

This refers to the famous statement in the Bhagavadgītā about applying the axe to the *aśvattha* tree of *saṁsāra*.[146] It is in the

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[142] Bhagavadgītā XVI.5.
[143] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 630-631.
[144] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 173.
[145] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[146] See Arvind Sharma, "The Appropriateness of the Aśvattha Tree as a Symbol of Saṁsāra," *The Aryan Path*, Vol. XLVII No. 4 (July-August 1976), pp. 166-169.

interpretation of the last *pāda* that Abhinavagupta introduces his own exegetical twist:

> "Having cut it" (*taṁ chittvā*): in this expression the act (of cutting), which is spoken of as applying to the substantive (*viśeṣya* = *aśvattham*) takes on the adjective (*viśeṣaṇam*) due to syntactic connection, as in the (Mīmāṁsic) injunction: "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands."[147]

It should be noted that in the injunction "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands,"[148] it is really the repetition of the commands which is crucial and more important than the bearing of the staff. Abhinavagupta seems to imply that the well-entrenched *roots* of the tree are to be chopped down rather than any other part thereof.

The process of *saṁsāra* in Hinduism is essentially represented by the transmigration of the *jīvātman* and *mokṣa* represents the recognition of the true nature of the *ātman*. This process is described in Bhagavadgītā XV.9.10. The verses run as follows:

śrotraṁ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca
    rasanaṁ ghrāṇam eva ca
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cāyaṁ
    viṣayān upasevate
utkrāmantam sthitaṁ vāpi
    bhuñjānam vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍha nānupaśyanti
    paśyanti jñānacakṣuṣaḥ[149]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Hearing, sight and touch,
    Taste and smell,
Making use of these, and the thought-organ, he
    Devotes himself to the objects of sense.
As he departs (from the body) or remains (in it)
    Or experiences (sense-objects), while attended by the [Strands,
Deluded men do not perceive him,
    Those whose eye is knowledge, perceive him.[150]

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[147] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 614-615, 617.

[148] *Ibid.*, *daṇḍī praiṣān anubrūyāt*. The B.O.R.I. manuscript reads *daṇḍī praiṣyo' nu na brūyāt*?

[149] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 174.

[150] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

Abhinavagupta's gloss on the verse is significant in emphasizing the moral desiderata for achieving spiritual insight, and also for the rather attractive metaphor he develops.

> Now the verse beginning *śrotraṁ*: "The mind"—by this the heart is indicated. Therefore remaining present on account of being united with the physical condition, and leaving in order to take hold of another body, or for enjoying the sense-objects, the ignorant do not see it because they are unenlightened. But the enlightened ones, seeking out its nature of consciousness everywhere in unbroken *samādhi* know it as it is because they are diligent. In the case of the ignorant, however, even effort does not bear fruit because of the immaturity of their emotion. In autumn, even with the intensive application of resources such as water etc., the sown seeds are not able to come to fruition. Hence resources alone do not suffice. The case of the water which is released by the wheel of the pond where water has collected in spring is, however, something else. Hardly is there a piece of earth, rendered desolate by winter, which shines up with the mere touch of the sun's rays; just so the effort of those who are not self-controlled, their effort not being fullfledged and wholehearted, does not succeed. Therefore those who have obtained the (spiritual) means represented by Śaivite initiation etc., cannot be deemed to be practising the method in its entirety if their inner eye is full of complexes such as anger, attachment etc. As has been said: "On anger etc., being present, even the initiated do not obtain *mokṣa*."[151]

Abhinavagupta finds ample scope to display his exegetical versatility in a well-known verse of the Seventeenth Chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā. The verse is well-known; unfortunately it is also well-known for its obscurity. It runs as follows (Bhagavadgītā XVII.23):

> auṁ tat sad iti nirdeśo
> brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ
> brāhmaṇās tena vedāś ca
> yajñāś ca vihitāḥ purā[152]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

> Om, Tat Sat: thus the designation
> Of Brahman, threefold, is recorded.
> Thereby brahmans, and Vedas,
> And acts of worship were fashioned of old.[153]

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151 Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 621-623.
152 V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 180.
153 Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

Abhinavagupta comments:

Now how do those whose understanding has gone beyond the perils of the three *guṇas*, perform ritual acts? Their manner is described [in the verse] beginning with *auṁ tat sad*, etc. *Auṁ*, *tat* and *sat*, by these three words there is the description, the encounter, of *brahman*. Therein by *auṁ* it is indicated that the scriptural injunction (regarding *yajña* etc.) should be accepted as long as one is alive. By *tat*, a pronoun, which is only expressive of the general and incapable of any specific determination, the non-seeking of the fruits (of ritual acts offered) in the *brahman* is spoken of, because of the absence of any seeking without the special mention of what is sought after. Besides, even in the case of the acceptance of all particular actions, of all fruits, (there is the absence of the attainment of any special fruit) on account of non-attachment to any special fruit although one is the performer of all action. *Sat*, by this report, praise is mentioned. *Yajñas* etc., though performed, acquire the quality of *tamas* if performed with the thought that (the performance of) *yajñas* etc. is evil. Therefore regarded as a duty (even though) performed with a specific result in mind (a sacrifice performed as) *sat* is not a cause of bondage, so that even those who perform *yajña* etc., regarding it as a duty, are not bound. With this very intention has it been said in the *ādiparvan*:

> *Tapas* is no bondage, study is no bondage, natural performance of Vedic rites is no bondage (even) much seizure of wealth is no bondage, but all of them, affected by attachment, are bondage.

[The word] *kalka* [repeatedly used in the verse cited above] means bondage. [The word] *svābhāvika* [in the verse quoted above, in the expression *svābhāviko vedavidhiḥ*] means that the Vedas etc., along with the six ancillary sciences, should be studied by the *brāhmaṇa* without any specific reason (i.e. desire). [The word] *prasahya* [similarly in the above verse] means a manner inconsistent with what is scripturally or socially acceptable. [The word *bhāvopahatam* is to be understood thus:] these are the cause of bondage when affected by a mind which is united with the three *guṇas* such as *sattva* etc. Therefore *yajña* etc., so long as the body exists, should be performed, and action should be performed for its sake such as earning, etc.

Or else, by *auṁ* is propounded the pacification of the phenomenon (of *saṁsāra*); by *tat* the nature (of the supreme) free from desire, only touched by the nascent wave of the universe and by *sat*, notwithstanding the perfection (of the supreme principle) the coming into being of various natures which cause plurality in the (reality to appear), which possesses tranquility and (perfect) freedom of will. Moreover, it has been said that (the word *sat*) can be used in the sense of reality and goodness.[154] Therefore, having first presented the supremely tranquil form (of *brahman*), that supreme form then sports, which is accompanied with waves in the form of desire, pervaded by the desire to give, to perform sacrifice, to perform austerities in the midst of which the whole body of ceremonies

[154] Bhagavadgītā XVII.26.

and factors involved therein: *dāna*, *yajña* and *tapas* enjoined in Hindu religious law is fulfilled. This indeed is the equilibrium state of the triad and the natural form free from destruction. So then, whose, what, how, wherefrom and whereby should any fruit (of such action) come about?[155]

In spite of the fact that the passage has been much commented on,[156] Abhinavagupta's remarks are original.[157]

Since Abhinavagupta regards the Fifteenth Chapter as virtually concluding the Bhagavadgītā, it is not surprising that the rest of the significant glosses in his commentary are encountered in Chapter Eighteen, the last chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, difficult to overlook on account of its length. It will be interesting to see what Abhinavagupta has to say on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.14 about which, Franklin Edgerton remarks rather acidly, that "Much needless trouble has been caused by this verse, owing to attempts to make it too philosophical, and particularly to make it fit the theories of the later so-called Sāṃkhya system."[158] This verse, along with the preceding, runs as follows:

pancaitāni mahābāho
    kāraṇāni nibodha me
sāṁkhye kṛtānte proktāni
    siddhaye sarvakarmaṇām

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[155] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 666-671.

[156] See Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 666-671.

[157] The remarks are difficult to assess in view of the fact that "Commentators vary considerably in their interpretations of this obscure passage" (W. Douglas P. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 199 footnote). According to Hill: "The intimate, indissoluble connexion between all true sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving, and the authority of Scripture, is indicated by the use of the mystic syllables—OṀ TAT SAT. These form the threefold designation of Brahman, OṀ expressing its absolute supremacy, TAT is universality, and SAT its reality, reflected as goodness in the world of men. The castes (with Brāhmaṇas at their head), the Vedas, and the Sacrifices proceed from this one source, and are thus inseparable.

Therefore all Vedic rites of sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving begin with the utterance of OṀ. Those, too, whose aim is liberation, and in whose works is no desire for fruit, knowing that all is Brahman, perform their rites with thought of Brahman as TAT. And all who would continue in sacrifice, austerity, and almsgiving, or any work that has these for its end, and make them real and good and auspicious, must join with them the thought of Brahman as SAT.

For whatsoever sacrifice is offered, or austerity practised, or alms given, without the thought and utterance of the sacred threefold name, and therefore contrary to rule and without faith, is ASAT, having neither reality nor goodness; such work is of no value in this world, and bears no fruit of happiness hereafter." (*Ibid.*, p. 198, fn. 3.)

[158] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā
karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham
vividhāś ca pṛthakceṣṭā
daivaṁ caivātra pañcamam[159]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

O great-armed one, these five
Factors learn from Me,
Which are declared in the reason-method doctrine
For the effective performance of all actions.
The (material) basis, the agent too,
And the instruments of various sorts,
And the various motions of several kinds,
And just Fate as the fifth of them.[160]

It is interesting that Abhinavagupta's gloss, in view of Edgerton's remarks, is refreshingly direct. Moreover, he also criticizes those who, in his view, try to obfuscate the meaning.

Now it is preached [through the verses beginning with] *pañcaitāni* etc., that even in a situation where one performs worldly actions, there being five causes present (which are responsible) in (the fruition of) an action, these people, blinded by ignorance, impose upon the *ātman* the burden of being the whole agent of action and thus through their own (mis-) understanding bind themselves, while [the fact of the matter is that] there is really no such bondage. [The word *kṛtānta* should be understood thus:] that with respect to which a conclusion has been reached is *kṛtānta*, the same as *siddhānta*. By *adhiṣṭhāna* is meant the object. By *daivam* is meant (*karmic*) merit and demerit earned earlier on (in previous lives). These five, *adhiṣṭhāna* etc., assembled together, are the causes in the case of all actions. Others have said, in a somewhat forced way, [that *adhiṣṭhāna* has to be interpreted thus:] that by which all action is presided over is *adhiṣṭhāna*, as described by the word *karma yoga* [and should be understood] as denoting the five-fold modifications which result when the *buddhi* takes on a disposition characterized by *rajas*, namely (1) firmness, (2) faith, (3) joy, (4) no desire to know and (5) the desire to know. The *kartā* or doer is the one who aims at the fruit and possesses the distinguishing characteristic of *buddhi*. *Karaṇam* or means are the mind, eye, etc.; (means internal) as well as external, such as a dagger etc. *Ceṣṭā* or motion is that of *prāṇa*, *apāna*, etc. (the various "winds"). By the word *daiva* or Fate are indicated Right (*dharma*) and Wrong (*adharma*) and by their use are indicated all the states arising in the *buddhi* from them. Others (erroneously)

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[159] V. S. Sukthankar and S. K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 182.
[160] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

take *adhiṣṭhāna* to be God, on account of being of imperfect wisdom because of possessing an unsettled mind. He, however, who performs action with a firm rejection of the ego and as purified (in his attitude) in a hundred subtle ways as mentioned earlier, does not become involved (with the fruit of action) on account of his perfect wisdom: this is what is meant.[161]

In regarding *ceṣṭā* as motion of the *prāṇas*, Abhinavagupta is in line with Śaṅkara[162] and Rāmānuja.[163]

Another well-known verse of the Eighteenth Chapter is verse No. 66. Indeed, it is perhaps the best-known verse of that chapter, being regarded among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas as the *carama śloka* or the last word.[164] Small wonder, then, that it is commented upon in detail by Rāmānuja[165] and even Śaṅkara glosses the verse at length.[166] By contrast, Abhinavagupta's gloss on this verse is brief. The verse runs as follows:

sarvadharmān parityajya
  mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo
  mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ[167]

Franklin Edgerton translates:

Abandoning all (other) duties,
  Go to Me as thy sole refuge;
From all evils I thee
  Shall rescue: be not grieved![168]

Abhinavagupta does not even gloss the verse independently. He comments on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.65.66 at the same time and writes:

"Now listen to that knowledge which has been identified herein as the 'most esoteric'," hence are said [the lines beginning with] *iṣṭo'si* and ending with *mā śucaḥ*. *Manmanā bhava* [occupy thy mind with me] herein among the scriptures it is offering to *brahman* which is primary: this is settled.

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[161] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 692-697.
[162] *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa 8*, p. 416.
[163] Mahāvana Śāstrī, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 278.
[164] John Braisted Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja* (Yale University Press, 1974), p. 215.
[165] *Ibid.*, pp. 215-217.
[166] *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa 8*, pp. 455-467.
[167] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 187.
[168] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

It is said that the scripture is meaningful in the case of one who causes the offering to be made to *brahman*; and (the Lord) says *sarvadharmān parityajya*. [Having given up all *dharmas*]. In the matter of this adventitious killing of relations, etc., in the battle: I am the doer of all that. Give up any sense of your own *dharma*; and banishing the thought from the mind that as the killing of *ācāryas* etc. is prohibited, *adharma* shall fall to your share, go to refuge in me who is One, the Doer of all, the supreme lord, and Independent, because I am the foundation of the inner nature of all. Thus is it that I, allknowing, shall release thee from all sins. Do not grieve. Do not be confused about your duty.[169]

It is extraordinary that even though the verse is clearly emotive, Abhinavagupta hardly comments on the verse from that point of view, but seems to take a rather *jñāna*-oriented view of the verse. This may not be surprising on the face of it as Abhinavagupta has stated in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā I.1[170] that he rejects the *jñāna-karmasamuccaya* interpretation of the Gītā and upholds *jñāna* alone; but *jñāna* for him is not the *Advaitic jñāna* of Śaṅkara but monotheistic knowledge of Śiva and love evoked by and directed towards the unified vision of God. Hence Abhinavagupta's treatment of this verse is rather surprising.

It is rather on his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.61 that Abhinavagupta produces a comment of considerable literary merit. The verse runs:

īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ
hṛddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarvabhūtāni
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā

Franklin Edgerton translates:[171]

Of all beings, the Lord
In the heart abides, Arjuna,
Causing all things to turn around
(As if) fixed in a machine, by his magic power.[172]

Abhinavagupta writes:

This God, the supreme soul, must indeed be accepted as a refuge. In Him,

[169] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 750, 752-755.
[170] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[171] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 187.
[172] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

the Presider, the Doer, the Knower, pervaded by His *ātman*, crystal-clear, *karmas* cannot dwell.[173] The fickle-minded young of the deer, whose only strength consists in their ability to take to flight, do not, of their own accord, resort to the state of going about their business of rumination skilfully when the lion-cub sits in the cave whose valiant lustre is made manifest by the multitudes of clusters of pearls, which have fallen from the temples of elephants in rut, torn apart by the extremely sharp ends of his claws.[174]

At one place, however, Abhinavagupta's comment in the course of the Eighteenth Chapter is truly extraordinary. This comment occurs in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII.73:

naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā
tvatprasādān mayācyuta
sthito 'smi gatasaṁdehaḥ
kariṣye vacanaṁ tava[175]

Franklin Edgerton translates these words of Arjuna thus:

Destroyed the confusion; attention (to the truth) is won,
By Thy grace, on my part, O Changeless One;
I stand firm, with doubts dispensed;
I shall do Thy word.[176]

Abhinavagupta comments:

Arjuna spoke. Herein, in this way, by saying, "My delusion is destroyed etc.," Arjuna's readiness to engage in battle has come about but proper knowledge of *brahman* has not been attained, indicating this (sage Vyāsa) creates room for Anugītā which is yet to come.[177]

The extraordinary feature of Abhinavagupta's comment lies in the fact that he regards the Anugītā as an extension, if not a continuation, of the Bhagavadgītā. It is true that Śaṅkara quotes from the Anugītā in his Introduction to the Bhagavadgītā,[178] but this is an exception rather than the rule. As R.C. Zaehner asks: "Why is it that Krishna's second discourse, the *Anugītā* or 'Supplementary Gītā,' remains neglected and almost unknown"?[179]

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[173] Disregard period after *viṣpaṣṭe* in the text.
[174] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 747-749.
[175] V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 188.
[176] Franklin Edgerton, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
[177] Wāsudeva Laxmaṇa Śāstrī Pansīkar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 770-771.
[178] *Śrīśāṅkaragranthāvaliḥ Sampuṭa 8*, p. 3.
[179] R.C. Zaehner, *Discordant Concord* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 118.

Abhinavagupta seems to be suggesting that the Anugītā is not to be treated merely as an appendage or an afterthought to the Bhagavadgītā but needs to be integrally related to it. That this view may possess considerable force has been demonstrated by this writer elsewhere.[180]

It is clear, then, that Abhinavagupta's commentary of the Bhagavadgītā is not a slavish imitation of some existing work nor merely a restatement of existing interpretations. In his etymological explanations, Abhinavagupta may be a trifle adventurous but he is ingenious; in his grammatical comments he may occasionally tend to be superficial but often comes up with brilliant suggestions; in his hermeneutics he betrays traces of Tantrika influence but this enables him to indicate unforeseen esoteric exegetical possibilities which are always challenging if not always convincing. His commentary is direct, to-the-point and brief, without its directness implying abruptness, its matter-of-factness, dullness and its brevity any lack of profundity.

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[180] Arvind Sharma, "The Role of the Anugītā in the Understanding of the Bhagavadgītā," *Religious Studies* (14), pp. 265-271.

THE TRANSLATION

INTRODUCTORY VERSES

1. He who, as identical with the various expanded and throbbing centres of existence, becomes perceived as possessed of mutual contradictoriness, but by force of meditating on whose unitary nature one goes to [i.e., the worshipper achieves] unity—that Lord Śambhu, the remover of evil, the abode of the rays of intelligence, is victorious.

NOTE: ekabhayabhāvanā: emended to *ekamayabhāvanā*.

2. This authoritative work, which measures a hundred thousand (verses) was composed by the sage Dvaipāyana; in it *mokṣa* is proclaimed as the primary goal but other *dharmas* are also described for the sake of nourishing it.
3. And verily, *mokṣa*—(which is) to merge in Lord Śiva, the eternal, free from desire, who has attained to all the divisions and forms, who is omniscient, and all of whose senses, etc., are pure in nature—that *mokṣa* is proclaimed succinctly.
4. Although *mokṣa* is here spoken of in connection with other matters, even so the verses of the Bhagavadgītā furnish the attainment thereof.
5. Although those (verses of the Bhagavadgītā) have been much commented on by the uninitiated; even so my undertaking is justifiable because it brings to light their hidden meaning.
6. And this Gītārthasaṅgraha was composed by Abhinavagupta after reflecting long on the text received through Bhaṭṭendurāja.

CHAPTER I

I. 1-9

The beginning of the first chapter [of the Gītā] is intended to show the predominance and inferiority of the elements of knowledge and ignorance.

NOTE: ABHIBHĀVYĀBHIBHĀVAKATVAM must be understood in the light of Gītā: XIV.10. The *sāttvikaḥ puruṣaḥ* is not a man who consists entirely of *sattvam*, but the man in whom *sattvam* predominates (*abhibhūya*) over *rajas* and *tamas*. So here: Abhinavagupta says that the first chapter shows the Pāṇḍavas to be men in whom *vidyā* predominates over *avidyā*.

The Kauravas are in the opposite case. *Neither* side has a perfect possession of *vidyā* or a complete lack of it. If that were so, the Gītā would be unnecessary, or useless.

For one who lacks the slightest trace of knowledge cannot be taught, nor can one who has eradicated the whole proliferation of ignorance be taught. It is rather the case that one who has reached either of these extremes cannot be made to budge from that point. On the other hand, where there is talk of instruction for the wise and for the opposite, this instruction is limited [to those between the two extremes]. In regard to a subject that is to be taught to persons of such tendencies (*tathātvaunmukhya*) there must be a doubt. Accordingly, and since instruction acts as a dispeller of doubt, doubt itself may be called a conflict between the party of knowledge and the party of ignorance.

The creation of the gods and the demons was a creation consisting of knowledge and ignorance (respectively). Thus the very beginning of the Gītā is an instruction in the path of *mokṣa*. When it is said that knowledge is primary and works should be abandoned or that works grounded in knowledge are not a hindrance to *mokṣa*, the intention is that knowledge is predominant and works no hindrance, not that knowledge and works should be conjoined on an equal footing. In this manner, we shall explain the purport of the author at the proper places. What use is further discussion here which could serve only as an obstacle to true understanding?

[The poem begins with the words:] *dharmakṣetra*, etc. Herein some speak of an alternative interpretation. [They explain the word *kurukṣetra* as] the field of the Kurus: *kurūṇām* = *karaṇānām* — organs of sense; *kṣetra* (field) = that which favours, that is, the field of the senses is the favourer of all the properties of transmigration as being that which helps to bring them about. Whereas *dharmakṣetra* (the field of *dharma*) is to be understood from the sentence, "This is the highest *dharma*; to see the soul by means of *yoga*," namely as being the body of the [aspirant for whom the Gītā is] intended, a body which offers salvation by its attainment of *apavarga* through the abandonment of everything opposed to *dharma*. [So that the question asked by king Dhṛtarāṣṭra may be paraphrased thus:] Standing in that [battle] where passion and detachment, anger and forbearance, etc. have come together in mutual conflict, for the senses etc. always aim at the injury of the body, what have my ignorant volitions, comparable to ignorant men, accomplished, and what have (my) wise

(volitions), the Pāṇḍavas, comparable to men of knowledge, accomplished? That is to say, which have defeated which? [The word *māmaka* may be understood as meaning] those who say, "This is mine" and act as if they were mere bodies,[1] that is, men of ignorance. Pāṇḍu means pure [hence the Kauravas stand for impure volitions and the Pāṇḍavas for the pure ones].

I. 10

What is to be gained by much counting? So the real state of affairs is spoken of in the verse [beginning with] *aparyāptam*. The Pāṇḍavas guarded by Bhīmasena are *aparyāpta*, that is, incapable of defeating us, or, are nothing when compared to our army. And the army belonging to us, protected by Bhīṣma, is *paryāpta*, that is, is capable of defeating these Pāṇḍavas, or they can probably win in battle.

NOTE: It is clear that Abhinavagupta followed the reading *bhīmābhirakṣitam* (for *bhīṣmābhirakṣitam*) in b and *bhīṣmābhirakṣitam* (for *bhīmābhirakṣitam*) in d. The same reading is found in the Kāśmīra Ms: K_3 and in Bhāskara Vedāntin.

I. 11-36

In the passage *ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu*, the word *ayana* means passages or lanes. These preceptors, etc., if they are judged under the sway of anger as objects to be killed will certainly lead (the slayer) into sin. Moreover, if one kills because the war is being waged for the sake of worldly enjoyments and happiness, one will certainly be committing sin. This is the *pūrvapakṣa* (the preliminary and incorrect view).

I. 35

If it be urged then that he who does (such) acts strictly in accordance with duty is (acting with) good judgement, an answer will be given in the words *dhārtarāṣṭrān*, etc. In the killing of armed men who attack one, sin alone is the killer. So the following meaning [is offered]. These our enemies are killed (i.e., will be killed) on account of sin. But having killed those who are in the grip of sin, the sin will infect us as well. Herein the sin referred to is the corruption that is seen in family traditions on account of greed.

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[1] Kāyanti = kāyam + kvip (upamānād ācāre) vide Pāṇini 3.1.11 vārttika.

I. 36

Therefore, it (sin, greed) causes one to neglect the traditions (*dharmas*) of the family, etc. (as explained by the verse) beginning with: *svajanaṁ hi kathaṁ hatvā*.

I. 43-44

In order to state briefly what a heinous sin killing is in regard to its specific result and considering those specific persons who are to be killed, Arjuna speaks in the first person to indicate the extremity of his agony, in the verse *aho bata*, etc. The "We" (*vayam*) here means all the various persons, as Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.

I. 45-46

Would it be proper for me, who among all these undiscriminating people have discrimination, to turn away from battle? Indeed, it would be proper (concludes Arjuna); so he says *yadi māṁ*, etc.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> If a sage, rendered powerless by the conflicting blows of knowledge and ignorance, turns from both sides by reason, he will become a man of no discrimination.

Here ends the first chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya*, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER II

II. 2

To begin with, the Lord instructs Arjuna by appealing to worldly considerations; in due course will he impart spiritual knowledge. Therefore he says: "It is not proper for a nobleman, etc."

II. 3

By rebuking him (with such epithets) as impotent, etc. the Lord shows that Arjuna's self-righteous pride in (doing what is really) unrighteous is false.

II. 4-5

By (saying) 'how can I fight Bhīṣma and Droṇa' and by (saying) 'I will enjoy (bloody) pleasures, etc.' (Arjuna) indicates that this (battle) is to be avoided both by consideration of the deed itself and by consideration of the specific consequence.

II. 6

"I do not know": by this (verse) he speaks with regard to the deed itself. For action does not proceed without consideration. Nor does one engage in battle aiming at defeat. And even victory here would be disaster; therefore he says, it is better to go about begging than to kill my elders.

II. 7

It is impossible to decide whether to desire victory or defeat, for even in the case of victory my kinsmen will be destroyed, as is indicated by (the words) 'between both armies, etc.' (II. 10). Thus assailed by doubt on every side he has desisted from battle; for this reason he says, "instruct me who have come to you."

II. 11. K

[The next verse glossed by Abhinavagupta is not present in the Critical Edition, but is found in the Kāśmīrī version of the Bhagavadgītā. It runs as follows:

tvaṁ mānuṣyeṇopahatāntarātmā
viṣādamohābhibhavād visañjñaḥ
kṛpāgṛhītaḥ samavekṣya bandhūn
abhiprapannān mukham antakasya.[1]

Your heart is smitten with humanity and you are faint, being overcome by distress and confusion. You are seized by compassion as you look at your kinsmen entering the mouth of death.

Abhinavagupta glosses this verse as follows:]

Therefore (Arjuna) standing between knowledge and ignorance is instructed by the Lord. The Lord said: You are smitten by humanity (*mānuṣya*). *Mānuṣya* is the quality of being a (mere) human. These (Kauravas) have entered the jaws of death of their own accord; so what is holding you back?

II. 11

(Now the verse beginning with) *aśocyān* (is explained). You grieve for the body and the soul. But one cannot grieve for the body, as it always perishes, while one should not grieve for the soul. No one,

[1] The metre is *Upendravajrā*.

whether dead or alive is to be grieved for. To explain: first, the soul is imperishable: second, what subject of grief is there in its transmigration through different bodies? Nor is the fact of transmigration to be grieved for. If it were so, then youth and other (stages of life) would be subjects of grief.

NOTE: II. 11. (b) in the Critical Edition reads *prajñāvādāṁś ca bhāṣase*. Abhinavagupta probably read *prājñavan nābhibhāṣase* as found in the Kāśmīrī version.

Two points are made; one by the verse (beginning with) *na hy evāham* and the other by the verse (beginning with) *dehino 'smin*. [First, to take the verse beginning with] *na hy evāham*: For I never was not; rather, I was. And so were these kings. [Now to take the verse beginning with] *dehino 'smin*: If (mere) change of form is a subject of grief, then why is the attainment of youth after childhood not grieved for? He who is steadfast (brave) does not grieve. If there is fortitude and, moreover, one does not care for the physical body, then it is easy [to avoid grief]. Therefore, seek to be steadfast.

II. 14

Those who are not steadfast grieve over the states of cold and warmth, pleasure and pain, etc. which arise from the connection of the *ātman*, through the senses, with the sensible properties (*sparśa*) of objects (of the material world) indicated by the word *mātrā*; but those who are steadfast do not. Thus the Text says *mātrāsparśāḥ* etc. Or the meaning may be that these objects are sensible only with the senses (*mātrāḥ*), not directly to the supreme soul. The sense of these objects is characterized by *āgama* (arising) and *apāya* (destruction). Bear them; put up with them.

II. 15

Is it because all these conditions come and go that they are grieved over? Let it not be so. For, what is this coming (*āgama*)? If it is an arising (*utpatti*), then what is that? If it is the coming into being of something that was not, it is false. Because having a non-existent nature means having no nature at all. How could that which has no self, which has no nature, be brought to have a nature? One cannot turn into blue what is not blue. Because it involves the fault of (a thing's) assuming a nature other than its own. As the text-book says: "The own nature of things does not change, like the sun's heat."

II. 16

Then let us say that the arising is gaining existence of that which was. Then what is there to grieve over in this coming (or arising), as it must be eternal inasmuch as there can never have been[2] an absence of that which has gained existence. The same holds for destruction, whether of an existent or a non-existent entity. That which is non-existent is simply non-existent. And how could that which has the nature of an existent ever have the nature of a non-existent? If you say, in the second moment it may have the nature of a non-existent, we say: then it must have been such in the first moment also. It must have had no being at all, for the own being (nature) of a thing cannot be lost. Well (you say), at least there can be the destruction of it by a hammer, etc. If the thing is distinct from its being (its own nature), what has then happened? Well, it is no longer seen. Let it not be seen, its being has not changed[3] any more than when something is covered by a cloth. But if the thing is not distinct (from its being), then, as we have said, it was not [in the first moment also]. The Text states this briefly in the verse *nāsato vidyate* etc. Now the Text explains this by reference to what happens in the world. There is no real existence of the body which is continuously perishing, because it is constantly being transformed into (different) states. And of the supreme soul, which is eternally existent, there is never destruction, because of its immutable nature [it is incapable of transformation (*pariṇāma*)]. Thus it is said, 'Imperishable verily is the soul and indestructible.'[4] [The seers of truth see] "the end" of these two, viz. the existent and the non-existent, that is, they see the basis, that (principle) upon which both entities rest.

II. 17

Now is that which is seen by the seers of truth eternal or non-eternal? With reference to this question he says *avināśi tu* etc. The (particle) *tu* has been used in the sense of 'and' (*ca*). And the *ātman* is imperishable.

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[2] Read *na jātu* in the text of the commentary.

[3] Punctuate the text of the Commentary thus: *mā nāma darśi|bhāvo na tv anyathā-bhūtaḥ*.

[4] Quotation from Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad IV.5.14.

II. 18

[Now the verse beginning with] *antavanta*: Objects that undergo tangible destruction at the time when they cease to be perceptible[5] are also undergoing destruction, that is, are entering upon new states, every moment, since that (tangible destruction) would be otherwise inexplicable. As has been said: "On seeing something old in the end, one infers the loss of newness at every moment." And as the sage says: "There is a transformation of the particles of separate objects at every moment in all states, but it is not perceived on account of its minuteness." By "specific objects" is meant separate capabilities of useful activity.

II. 19

Physical bodies are mortal and perishable. The *ātman* is eternal for it is not an object of knowledge (but the subject). Transformation belongs to the objects of knowledge, to inert matter, not to the spirit which is pure consciousness. This is so because it cannot possess other than its own nature. Thus the physical bodies are forever perishable and not to be grieved over. The *ātman* is forever imperishable and therefore should not be grieved over. It is because of this that the sage Vyāsa has exhibited a single Kṛtya suffix[6] in two different senses in the passage *aśocyān anvaśocas tvam*. Now the verse *ya'enam* etc. He who takes the soul as the slayer and the body as slain is ignorant. Therefore he is bound.

> *NOTE:* One should probably read *tena na śocanārhaḥ/ tantre 'yam ekaḥ kṛtyapratyayaḥ dvayor* etc. Abhinavagupta interprets the Kṛtya suffix *ṇyat* in *aśocyān* (II. 11) in the sense of *śakya* (Pāṇini 3.3.172) as applied to the body and in the sense of *arha* (Pāṇini 3.3.169) as applied to the soul. We *cannot* grieve for the body, we *should* not grieve for the soul.

II. 20

"It is never born nor dies." He explains this by the words *nāyaṁ bhūtvā*. It is not correct that the *ātman* after having not been, is; rather after having been, it is. Therefore it is not born. Nor does it die, since, having been, it will not fail to be; rather, it will be.

II. 21

Now the verse beginning *vedāvināśinam*: He who, from being

[5] Or visible to the eye.

[6] Read *kṛtyapratyayayor* instead of *kṛtyayapratyayayor* in the text of the commentary.

enlightened, knows the *ātman* does not kill nor is killed, is not destroyed. Thus the *ātman* is concealed within the body.

II. 23

Now the verse beginning *nainam*: In no way can weapons, etc. be the cause of its destruction. For the *ātman*, whose nature is consciousness alone, which belongs to nothing else, which is secure and independent, cannot be destroyed by any process, whether by its assumption of a different nature, by the destruction of what it belongs to, by the separation of its parts, or by the use of something which would counteract it. The fact that due to the necessity of transmigrating to another body, the soul, although eternal is constantly going from its old body to another one, does not imply that it is bound.[7] Because the body is not stable for even a moment. Knowing it to be thus, you should not grieve for the *ātman*.

II. 26

Now the verse beginning *athavainam*: Now if you regard this body as being continuously born because of the unbroken continuity (of bodies), even then there is nothing to grieve over. Or (if you regard the body) as continuously perishing because of constantly altering process, even then there is nothing to grieve over. In the same way, whether you consider the *ātman* as continuously being born or as continuously dying on account of union or separation with these bodies, your sorrowing over the persons involved is altogether misplaced.

II. 27

Otherwise eternality and perishability make no sense because 'what is born must die.' After birth there is death and after death there is birth; the continuum of birth and death is like a wheel. To what extent, then, may one grieve?

II. 28

Moreover (consider the verse) *avyaktādīni*. The souls may be perishable or imperishable but to him who grieves the Text says that the soul is unmanifest in the beginning and at the end and is manifest

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[7] It is suggested that the text of the commentary be read as: *na ca dehāntaragamanasyāvaśyakatvāt pūrvadehān nityo 'pi* etc.

in the interval ...[8] but on the contrary in the modification which does have a lamentable nature. Furthermore some basic cause must be admited and that cause [viz. *prakṛti*], being of a nature which varies according to its successive stages, and exhibiting within itself the variety of endless creation, manifestation and destruction of each and every thing, is eternally possessed of this nature. So who can grieve over this?

II. 29

Being such, the *ātman* "is rarely seen by anyone." [It may be asked:] if the *ātman*, being such, is indestructible, why is it not perceived as such by everyone? Because it is a marvel, seen only by a few. Even having heard of it no one "knows," that is, understands the soul.

II. 30

Now the verse *dehī nityam*: Thus the soul is eternally indestructible.

II. 31

Now the verse beginning *svadharmān api*: As one must not avoid one's own duty, one should not tremble at the thought of fighting.

II. 32

Now the verse beginning *yadṛcchayā*: Other *kṣatriyas* filled with desire, will not abandon such a battle because it leads to heaven; how much less can it be abandoned by one (like you) who has been spiritually instructed? This is what is meant.

II. 33

[The charge] that you are withdrawing because of fear will strike you a worse blow than a hundred weapons. This is stated in (the verse beginning with) *atha ced iti*.

II. 33-37

Besides [there is the consideration contained in the verse beginning with], *akīrtim*. The five *ślokas* beginning with the verse *atha cet* and ending with the verse that ends in *kṛtaniścayaḥ*, etc. are in the form

[8] Something seems to have dropped out of the text of the commentary.

of a concession. If you stand by wordly norms of behaviour, then too you must act (i.e., fight).

II. 38

Now the verse beginning *sukhaduḥkha*: If you perform actions in accordance with your duty, you will incur no sin.

II. 39

Now the verse begining with *eṣā te*: This definitive opinion in the Sāṅkhya, that is, in correct knowledge, has been given to you. And listen now to the same opinion, as it is given in the Yoga for the skilful accomplishment of action (*karma*). By this opinion you will escape the bondage of Karma. Karma does not bind by itself, being inert. Hence it is the soul which binds itself with actions as transformed with *vāsanās*.

NOTE: Vāsanās: The *vāsanās* are the traces left on the personality by a man's acts, the seeds of retribution, the latent predispositions.

II. 40

There is no destruction by transgression, or offence, or heedlessness in this doctrine, because it has no heedlessness. Just as a burning pan of oil cools down with (the application of) a small amount of sandal-paste, even so the terror of *saṁsāra* is destroyed even by a small bit of Yogic doctrine.

II. 41

Nor is this doctrine brought in as something new or unprecedented. Rather it is (as explained by the verse) definitive, "*vyavasāyātmikā*." Definitive means it is a single doctrine for all things, [but] it becomes manifold because of the different issues to be resolved.

II. 42-43

Thus, in the verses beginning *yām imām* and *kāmātmānaḥ* —

II. 44

— and *bhogaiśvarye'ti.* Those who seek sensual enjoyments use a speech that takes the body as the self, flowery, and permeated with desire for heaven. So those unwise people desire *karma* as the fruit of this life.[9] Losing their minds over the Vedic speech that they have

[9] The sense would be improved by reading *ata eva janmanaḥ karmaṇaiva phalam icchanti*: "So they seek the fruit of this life by action (ritual) only."

thought up, even though they may be given the definitive doctrine, they are unfit for *samādhi*. The reason: their mind being set on the fruit of action—this is the intended meaning of the three verses [II.42.43.44].

II. 45

And therefore [the verse beginning with] *traiguṇya* etc.

Because the Vedas are composed of the three *guṇas* [they are called *viṣayāḥ*], that is, they bind (*sinvanti*) to a great degree (*viśeṣeṇa*), and as they bind, they may be called bonds.

NOTE: Viśaya: read *viśeṣeṇa sinvanti badhnanti bandḥakāḥ*, compare Kṣīrasvāmin on Amarakoṣa 1.4.7 (giving the etymology of *viṣayaḥ*). Abhinavagupta is here giving an explanation of the words *traiguṇyaviṣayā vedāḥ* in the text.

Because Vedic rituals being performed with a mind deluded by (considerations of) pleasure and pain serve to bind, therefore collectively the *guṇas*, so far as they are objects of desire, should be given up. But if this were meant to be condemnatory of the Vedas, the war, which is the subject (of the whole poem) could not be justified because of the absence of anything other than the Vedas for determining one's duty [so the statement is really not anti-Vedic]. In the case of those whose desires for the fruits (of action) have melted away, the Vedas are not bonds, because the Vedas are for them supremely useful for achieving correct knowledge.

II. 46

Hence is said the verse (beginning with) *yāvān artha*—

II. 47

He whose primary concern is only with duty and knowledge, has need of only a limited amount of Vedic speech (recitation). Accordingly it is said "be concerned with action alone," not with the fruit of action. But surely[10] fruits follow inescapably upon actions being performed. Not so. If in performing actions you are pervaded by the impurity of the desire for the fruit of action, then there exists a cause for the fruit of action to arise. And that attachment to non-action that arises from one's thinking "that fruit which is not sought (by

[10] In place of *nanu karmaphaleṣu| na tu karmaṇi* ..., read *na tu karmaphaleṣu nanu karmaṇi* ....

action), namely knowledge, does not come to one who does not desire it," that attachment holds one in a vice-like grip and has the nature of a false understanding; accordingly, it must be shaken off.[11]

II. 48

Now the verse beginning with *yogasthaḥ*: Perform actions taking your stand in Yoga. Equanimity is Yoga.

II. 48.K

This verse occurs only in the Kāśmīrī recension and runs as follows:

yasya sarve samārambhā nirāśir-bandhanās tv iha
tyāge yasya hutaṁ sarvaṁ sa tyāgī sa ca buddhimān[12]
He, all of whose undertakings in this world are free from the bondage of expectation, who has sacrificed everything in (the fire of) renunciation, he is the true renouncer and is (really) wise.

Abhinavagupta glosses this verse thus:

Now the verse beginning with *yasya sarve*: He all of whose transactions are without[13] the bondage of expectation, for desire is a bond.

II. 49

Now the verse beginning with *dūreṇa hi*: Verily through *buddhiyoga* (discipline of judgement) the inferior *karma* beset with evil results is removed.[14] Therefore seek refuge in such judgement; by him who gains such judgement —

II. 50

[is achieved what is described in the verses beginning with] *ubhe sukṛte*. By the word 'both' the contradiction between the two is indicated. "Therefore train yourself for yoga": So that both good and evil deeds[15] are destroyed — acting in such a manner is the supreme skill — this is the idea.

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[11] One must read *iti tyājya' eva* to agree with the Gītā verse.

[12] V. S. Sukthankar and Shripad Krishna Belvalkar, eds., *The Bhīṣmaparvan* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1947), p. 123.

[13] To agree with the verse one must read *bandhanena na yuktāḥ*.

[14] This is an extraordinary interpretation of the Gītā text.

[15] One must omit *na*, which seems to be a case of dittography caused by the following *na* of *naśyataḥ*.

II. 51

Now the verse beginning with *karmajam*: Those who follow the doctrine of Yoga, having given up the fruit of actions, give up the bond of transmigration and attain to Brahma-being.

II. 52-53

Now the verse beginning with *yadā te*: This realization (*abhijñāna*) will become obvious at the time of the attainment of Yogic understanding. There is (then) lack of interest in scriptures of both kinds — those which one wants to hear and those which one has (already) heard. This is as much as to say that your wrongly foreseeing the destruction of your family, etc. [as a result of your waging war, cf. Gītā I.39] is a great deception, due to the memory of books which favor an ego that has fallen into the intoxication of ignorance. Such false views will go away when the overestimation of books of teaching disappears.

II. 54

Now the verse beginning with *sthiraprajña* [see NOTE (1) below]: Since the text says with reference to the *yogin* in meditation "when his *buddhi* comes to a halt" (II. 53), it has shown that the word *sthiraprajña* is denotative of that [viz. of the *yogin* in meditation]. But what sort of expression is this [see NOTE (2) below], what is the original cause by which the object is expressed in these words? Thus, the first question here is the question: is the word *sthiraprajña* denotative by force of *rūḍhi* [the conventional application of words regardless of their etymological meaning], or is it denotative in accordance with its etymological meaning [see NOTE (3) below]? This is the first question.

Although a doubt does not really arise here concerning the conventional usage [see NOTE (4) below], the author still asks the question in order to make clear the etymological sense, which when obtained may serve to define the nature [of the person referred to]. *Sthiradhīḥ*: The word *sthiradhīḥ* might have as its designation a) the [sum of its] words, or b) the thing [that the words refer to]. That is to say, does a) refer to the way such a person operates, or b) does it refer simply to [a person, namely] an ascetic [see NOTE (5) below]? This is the second question.

And how does this *yogin* of firm mind sit, that is, how does he practise [his *yoga*]; just what is his firmness? This is the third question.

And as he practises [his *yoga*], what does he attain? This is the fourth.

NOTE (1): Throughout the commentary one should read *sthiraprajña* and *sthiradhīḥ*, these being the Kashmir readings. The printed text often substitutes the vulgate reading *sthita-*.
NOTE (2): One should punctuate the line *tasya kā bhāṣā, kiṁ pravṛttinimittam* etc.
NOTE (3): The question can best be explained by reference to an easy example. If we say *rājā asmin deśe anveṣṭavyaḥ* "a *rājā* should be sought for this country," we may mean either of two things depending on whether we take the word *rājā* conventionally (*rūḍhyā*) or etymologically (*anvartham*). In the first case all we are saying is that a king is needed. Here the *pravṛttinimitta* (the occasion, the object source, of our expression '*rājā*') is any ruler of men. In the second case we mean "one who pleases his subjects (*rañjayati prajā iti rājā*) is to be sought for this country." Here the *pravṛttinimitta* is far more restricted.

Abhinava's interpretation of *kā bhāṣā* differs sharply from Śaṅkara's although both were led to their comments by the same difficulty: the fear of a tautology between *kā bhāṣā* and *kiṁ prabhāṣeta*. Rāmānuja shows some similarity to Abhinava, indeed a close similarity if we follow Vedānta Deśika's commentary on Rāmānuja.
NOTE (4): Since the Text is evidence for the *rūḍhi* usage by its having already referred to the *yogin* in meditation.
NOTE (5): I.e. does *sthiradhīḥ* mean specifically 'him who acts always with a firm mind,' or does it mean simply 'an ascetic'? This again is like the question regarding the meaning of *rājā*; see note (3). [D.H.H.I.]

II. 55

The Blessed One proceeds to answer the four questions in succession. "The glorious one answered, *prajahāti* etc." [*Sthiraprajña*]: he whose wisdom is *sthira*, that is *dṛḍha*,[16] firm. There is conventional usage here, since the term is regularly used conventionally of the *ātman*. But if we take the word *sthiraprajña* in its etymological sense, it will also be appropriate because the *yogin* has withdrawn or ceased from the commotion caused by sense objects. Thus the first question is answered. [D.H.H.I.]

II. 56

Now the verse beginning with *duḥkheṣu*: He whose disposition is free from attachment and aversion in the midst of pleasure and pain, that sage alone is a *sthiraprajña*, none else.

[16] I suppose one should read *sthirā dṛḍhā prajñā yasya*. [D.H.H.I.]

II. 57

This too is said [in the verse beginning with] *yaḥ sarvatra*. No joy or grief is felt by him when he encounters favourable or unfavourable experiences.

II. 58

Now the verse beginning: *yadā saṁharate*. He is not fixed in Yoga all the time; just as a cook [is not always cooking]. He is a *sthira-prajña* whenever indeed he withdraws the senses into himself, just as a tortoise retracts its limbs, from the objects of sense, having shut out these objects of sense. Or, (we may interpret as follows): Beginning with the objects of sense he (goes on and) dissolves the senses themselves into the self; that is, he reduces the conjoined (*āsannam*) senses and sense objects to just the self.

II. 64

Now the verse beginning with *krodhāt*: The renunciation of the objects of the senses by the ordinary ascetic culminates in the very grasping of those objects, for he keeps thinking of them as he gives them up. At the very time of meditation, his attachments, etc. arise. Therefore it is the renunciation of the objects of desire in the manner of the *sthiraprajña* which is successful.

II. 68

Now the verse beginning *tasmād yasya*: He who has his mind in control, even while he is experiencing the objects of sense is not overcome by the waves of anger [desire and folly]. Accordingly he alone is the *sthiraprajña yogin*. This is the sense.

NOTE: Clearly the negative has dropped out from the text, read: *na krodhādikallolair*.

II. 69

And the Yogin, even while engaged in all kinds of worldly activities is beyond worldly life: explaining this, the Lord briefly indicates (the Yogin's) nature [in the verse beginning] *yā niśā*. The deluding *māyā*, which is the (dark) night for all creatures, in that the sage stays awake (thinking): how can it be got rid of. And the condition in which the world is awake and performs various activities, that is night for the sage because he is not awake to worldly concerns. This

is as much to say [the following]. *Māyā* has two illusion-making faculties, the world of forms (*nāmarūpam*) and the appearance of a modicum of pleasure (*sukhatantutābhāsatvam*). In the former the world fails to take account of its true (illusory) nature and so is intellectually caught in the second.

NOTE: See Locana on Ānandavardhana 3.1 who quotes *Gītā* verse II.69: *tasmād bādhitasvārtham etad vākyam saṁyamino lokottaratālakṣaṇena nimittena tattvadṛṣṭāvadhānam mithyādṛṣṭau ca parāṅmukhaṁ ca dhvanati ...... sarveṣām bhūtānāṁ yā niśā vyāmohajananī tattvadṛṣṭiḥ tasyāṁ saṁyamī jāgarti kathaṁ prāpyeta iti ...... yadi vā sarvabhūtaniśāyām mohinyām jāgarti katham ayam heya iti.*

The Yogin, on the contrary, takes a look at its delusive faculty only to uproot it and as not touched by its modicum of pleasure. Seeing *māyā* (for what it is), of perfect knowledge, disregarding petty pleasure on account of having destroyed false knowledge,—it (*māyā*) is night for him because he really sees. This is a wonder (i.e., a paradox). Or, one may put it that the Yogin stays awake in knowledge wherein all are confused and does not stay awake in ignorance in which the ordinary person is awake, this too is a paradox.

II. 70

Hence [the verse] *āpūryamāṇam* etc. The Yogin does not run outside himself to satisfy his desires; rather the desires although entering him by the invariable association with the senses do not affect(?) him, just as the streams of the rivers do not affect(?) the ocean. Thus the third question is answered.

NOTE: The text seems to be corrupt. One wants something like *viṣayā' anupraviśanto na kṣobhanatām yānti.*

II. 71-72

[Now the verse beginning with] *vihāya* and *eṣā*: That Yogin, on account of having abandoned all desires, attains to the peace of *mokṣa*.

Such is the reality of Brahman; on having stayed or found a place in which even for a moment one attains to the supreme Brahman on the dissolution of the body. Thus all four questions are answered.

NOTE: iti śivam: Abhinava uses this phrase to indicate the end of a chapter, literally "all that precedes has been holy."

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Strange, indeed, is the way the mind works with Yoga. It ventures upon the objects of the senses (and resorts to them) indeed; (but) though resorting to them it may give them up.[17]

Here ends the second chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya*, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER III

III. 1.2

śrīḥ. Now the verses beginning with *jyāyasī* and *vyāmiśreṇa*. Action has been spoken of and knowledge as well. These two are not equally important; rather, knowledge is primary. But if actions are to be destroyed by the force of knowledge on the principle laid down in *buddhiyukto jahātīha* (II.50), then what is the point in performing actions in the first place. This is the purport of the question.

III. 3

The Lord gives the reply [in the verse beginning] *loke 'smin*. In the world these two courses are well-known: knowledge, which the Sāṅkhyas consider primary, and action, which the Yogins (consider primary). But I have declared them to be one and the same principle, because self-realization (*saṃvittva*) consists of both knowledge and action.

III. 5

Action, which is included in knowledge, cannot be avoided because one is not free (to do otherwise). One must do things because the body, speech and mind consist of movement (*parispanda*).

III. 6

Now the verse beginning *karmendriyāṇi*. If one does not act with the organs of action then one surely acts with the mind; and this (giving up the organs of action), is a foolish course because mental actions are utterly unavoidable.

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[17] Read *viṣayān āśrayaṃs tān parityajet*.

III. 7

Now the verse beginning *yas tu*. There is no loss of knowledge (*jñāna*) in the mental activity involved in performing actions as the actions are performed mechanically.[1]

III. 8

Therefore [the verse beginning with] *niyataṃ kuru*. Constantly perform the actions enjoined by the scriptures, for the mere business of staying alive depends on action.

III. 9

Wherefore [the verse beginning with] *yajñārthāt*. Actions bind when they are other than obligatory actions performed for the sake of *yajña* (sacrifice). Obligatory actions, being free from attachment to the fruit, yield no fruit when they are performed.[2]

III. 10

Now the verse beginning *saha*. The Lord of the creatures, that is, the highest soul (*paramātmā*) created creatures along with *karmas* (actions). And he said: from the action of creatures (will proceed) their continuous generation. And these (actions) will confer the desired ends of *saṁsāra* (material life) or *mokṣa* (salvation). Through attachment (to them) they will confer *saṁsāra* and through freedom from attachment (to them) they will confer *mokṣa*. So those very persons whose chief goal is *mokṣa* should deal with (not reject) the objects of the senses. That is what is said here.

III. 11

[The word *deva* is derived from the root *div* 'to play, take pleasure.' Thus] *devāḥ* here means the lords of the senses, who are characterized by taking pleasure, who function through the senses, and who are celebrated in esoteric texts. You should gratify these lords by your action. The meaning is that you should enjoy the objects of sense insofar as may be possible. Then these [lords], being satisfied, will grant you *apavargas* (preliminary states of release) which are appropriate to the very nature of the Self, for they are capable of this through their residing in your Self. After there has been a mutual

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[1] Literally, as by a puppet.

[2] Read *avaśyakartavyaṃ muktaphalasaṅgatayā kriyamāṇam.*

service of this sort throughout a series of uninterrupted states of Activity (*vyutthāna*) and Trance (*samādhi*), a service characterized by your gratifying the senselords and their becoming absorbed in your Self, you will soon reach the highest good, that is, *brahma* (final release), which is characterized by the disappearance of all duality.

III. 12

This fact is to be pursued not only to preliminary release but all the way to final spiritual success (*siddhi*). And so the text says *iṣṭān* etc. The sense (-lords), being gratified by one's sacrifice, will take up their abode in whatever one meditates on, etc. So when this operation occurs, if one should remember or imagine or meditate on an object, that object is given to one [in positive form?] by the sense (-lords). If they are not given it back for their enjoyment, then an act of theft, of stealing, has occurred, for one has acted deceitfully. The Lord has already said earlier that "it is called hypocrisy." Therefore this is what the sentence means: one who desires an easy means either to final or to preliminary release, should enjoy pleasures as they fall to his share but only for the sake of assuaging the longing of the senses.

III. 13

Now the verse beginning *yajñaśiṣṭa*. [*yajñaśiṣṭāśinaḥ* 'partakers of what is left after a *yajña*] are those who partake of enjoyments out of regard for the scriptural injunctions which state them to be obligatory and who do it only as a mediate activity and not as part of a goal in itself eat this left-over of the meal which gratifies the group of deities who are the senses, a left-over that is characterized by the inner power and delight of that which is within themselves, are assimilated [to the same lords] and desire the enjoyment of the senses (only) as a means to that end. Such persons are freed from all karmic taints, good as well as bad.

[Now to explain] "those who [cook] only for their own sake." Those who, on account of ignorance, consider gross sensual enjoyment as superior and act with the thought that they are acting for their sake obtain the taint of both good and bad (deeds).

III. 14-15

Now the verses beginning *annād* and *karma*. From *annam* (lit. food), in its form as the individual experiendum, known also by such synonyms

as *māyā*, *avidyā* (nescience), *prakṛti* (nature), *kāla* (time), etc., come the various creatures [of this world]. And *annam* comes from *parjanya* (lit., the cloud) which has the form of the uninterrupted experiencing of the Soul, because the experiendum is dependent for its origination on the experiencer. And the *parjanya*, which is the experiencer comes from the *yajña* (sacrifice)[3] [which signifies the process of enjoyment] because the fact of being an enjoyer is dependent on the process of enjoyment, and the process of enjoyment comes from *karma* (action) which is the independent power called *kriyāśakti* (the power of action of Śiva, one of the five Śaktis through which the universe appears as Śiva's self-manifestation).

And that independent power, although it never ceases to be, comes from *brahma*, which is the active (*samucchalat*) being (*bhāva*) of God (*parameśvara*) replete with unlimited independent powers. [It comes from *brahma*] because it is in touch [with *brahma*]. And that *brahma*, which is active and of unhindered power, comes from *akṣara* (the Imperishable) which is pure self-consciousness in which all other waves of the divine nature come to rest. The *yajña* (sacrifice) thus placed causes[4] a wheel of six spokes to bear [its burden] and this wheel brings about release (*apavarga*) by the presence of three of its spokes and worldly activity (*vyavahāra*) by the guidance of the three [other] spokes. Thus Brahma, blessed with wave-like manifestations of knowledge and ignorance is firmly set in that very *yajña* (sacrifice).

But others (explain the verse differently, thus). Food by its successive transformation into (menstrual) blood, semen etc. is the cause of creatures. And food comes from clouds through rain. And the cloud comes from sacrifice because "the offering cast properly into the fire" goes to the sun, [whereby clouds are caused][5] and then rain. And sacrifice is the result of action and action is preceded by knowledge and knowledge is from the Imperishable.

Yet others (explain the verse differently, thus). The creatures are the senses (who flourish) by feeding on the five fields of the senses. These senses as well as the sense-fields are manifestations of the *ātman*. Thus the *ātman* itself is nourished through the enjoyment of the objects of the senses. Therefore, the omnipresent Brahman is firmly fixed in action because it is made up of action.

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[3] There should be no *daṇḍa* between *bhoktā* and *yajñād*.

[4] Read *vāhayati* for *vāhayan*.

[5] Some such phrase seems to have dropped out from the text.

III. 16

Now the verse beginning *evam*. He who does not accept the fore-going is sinful; for this reason, that he takes delight in the senses, not in the *ātman*.

III. 17

Now the verse beginning *yas tv ātma*. For one who rejoices in the *ātman*, action and non-action are the same, for he acts only at the instances of the senses (and not out of his desires). Therefore he neither restrains himself nor permits himself liberties toward created things with any personal consideration in mind.

III. 19

Furthermore such men as Janaka are examples of those who reached spiritual success by acting [not out of personal consideration but] simply because it was their duty so to act.

III. 20-22

Kindness towards others is a motive for enganging in action even for one who has obtained whatever is to be obtained and is fully contented. Herein the Lord cites his own example.

III. 23[6]

Therefore one should do what one ought to do unattached. Further-more, if one who knows what is to be known were to give up action, his people would suffer distraction (*durbheda*), that is, a loss of spiritual growth (*aprarūḍhi*), because their faith would be shaken by (the example) of a famous figure (not engaging in action).

III. 24

Because they are unable to let go their *karmic* propensities (on the one hand) nor are they able to enter the stream of knowledge (on the other): hence they become lax.

III. 25

Therefore those hallowed with proper knowledge will not create doubts in the minds of these, out of the compassionate consideration

[6] The commentary assigned by the text to III.22 belongs to III.23. There should be no sentence break between *tyajet* and *tallokānām*.

that mental doubting (and) slackening on the part of the people will be utterly disastrous.

III. 26

This he says [in the verse beginning with] *na buddhi*. Knowing thus himself, let him perform actions. And let him not destroy the understanding of the people.

III. 27

He has spoken concerning the ignorant, so he points out the nature of their ignorance [in the verse beginning with] *prakṛteḥ*. Actions are really performed by the *guṇas* such as *sattva* etc., connected as they are with *prakṛti*. But the fool, wrongly deciding that he himself is the doer, binds himself.

III. 28

Now the verse beginning *tattvavit*. He who knows the true nature of the *guṇas* and of *karma* emancipates himself by realizing: "it is *prakṛti* which acts; so what results can follow for me?".

III. 29

Having spoken of those attached to action, he now indicates the nature of attachment to action (in the verse beginning with) *prakṛteḥ*. It is because of the power of the *guṇas* such as *sattva*, etc., that ignorant persons become attached to the actions performed by the *guṇas* such as *sattva*, etc., which are connected with *prakṛti*.

III. 30

Therefore, being self-possessed one should engage in action: this has been said; but how? This the Lord clarifies in [the verse beginning with] *mayi*. Having cast away all actions on Me (i.e., God) with the thought, "I am not the doer," having realized that the independent supreme Lord alone is the doer of all and not I in any way, and wishing to act favourably to the world, do your worldly duty, which is to fight.

III. 31-32

Now the verses beginning *ye me* and *ye tv etat*. Whatever one does resorting to this view, it does not bind him. But those who have no

faith in this knowledge are destroyed; for they are constantly affected by the fear of birth and death, etc.

III. 33

Now the verse beginning *sadṛśam*. He also who is a man of knowledge will be in no way averse to such worldly activities as eating etc. Rather, he acts properly in accordance with the *sattva* (that predominates in him) and he knows that "after this the elements such as earth, etc., will dissolve in *prakṛti*, but the *ātman*, which is a non-actor, is eternally free." So who is imprisoned in birth, etc.? [Not the man of knowledge.]

III. 34

Then how is it that one speaks of its bondage—[this is explained in the verses beginning with] *indriyasya*, *śreyān* and *svadharma*.[7] The worldly man feels attachment or aversion toward every object of enjoyment, because out of his folly he believes that he himself is the agent of his acts. This is the point of special difference between a worldly man and a man of knowledge, although both carry out in common the acts of eating, etc. This is the correct view.

III. 35

For one who is altogether free from attachment and acts in accordance with his own nature (or duty, *svadharma*), there is no bondage involving (*karmic*) merit or demerit. One's own nature never disappears from the heart; it is naturally implanted and no creature is born without it; therefore it cannot be given up.

III. 36

Now the verse beginning *atha kena*. How is it that a person, even when knowing evil to be evil, proceeds to commit it; that is the question. The intention in raising the question is this. If one's own nature (*svadharma*) cannot be given up because of its being inseparable from one's heart, how (does one explain) the unrighteous conduct of these (Kauravas)? What is this *svadharma* which no creature is without? This is what is meant.

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[7] *svadharma* really is the first word not of an independent verse, but of line 2 of verse III.35.

III. 37

Now the answer. Even if the *dharma* is present in one's heart, this transgression is caused by the working of a foreign property; it is not a fault due to absence of one's *dharma*. With this in mind, the Lord has said [the verse beginning with] *kāma eṣa*. By the use of these two words (in apposition) their extreme opposition (to each other) is indicated. And these two, *kāma* (desire) and *krodha* (anger) are eternally interrelated, as one cannot exist without the other; therefore they are spoken of together. This [*kāma*] has an appetite for great pleasures and causes one to seek them greedily; while *krodha* (anger) confers sin because it causes one to commit sin. The wise man should regard it (i.e., *krodha*) as an enemy.

But it is not easy to give up a thing which is the destroyer of one's goals, etc., and which has the nature of ignorance;[8] with this in mind (Arjuna asks:)

EXTRA VERSES

At this point Abhinavagupta glosses five verses which do not appear in the critical or vulgate text of the Gītā but are found in the Kāśmīrī version. These are:

Arjuna uvāca:
bhavaty eṣa kathaṁ kṛṣṇa kathaṁ caiva vivardhate
kimātmakaḥ kimācāras tan mām ācakṣva pṛcchataḥ.
Śrībhagavān uvāca:
eṣa sūkṣmaḥ paraḥ śatrur dehinām indriyaiḥ saha
sukhatantra ivāsīno mohayan pārtha tiṣṭhati.
kāmakrodhamayo ghoraḥ stambhaharṣasamudbhavaḥ
ahaṁkāro 'bhimānātmā dustaraḥ pāpakarmabhiḥ.
harsaṃ asya nivartyaiṣa śokam sya dadāti ca
bhayaṁ cāsya karoty eṣa mohayaṁs tu muhur muhuḥ.
sa eṣa kaluṣaḥ kṣudraś chidraprekṣī dhanañjaya
rajaḥpravṛtto mohātmā manuṣyāṇām upadravaḥ.[9]

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[8] The Text reads *jñāna-svarūpam*, which makes no sense. I have substituted *ajñāna-svarūpam*.

[9] Read *mānuṣyāṇām*; see V.S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 128 (89*).

These verses may be translated thus:

Arjuna said:

O Kṛṣṇa, how does it happen and how does it grow? What is its nature and behaviour, tell me who am asking.

The Lord said:

This is an extremely subtle enemy of the embodied souls along with the senses, O son of Pṛthā, causing delusion seated as it were in the control of pleasure.

It consits of passion and anger, it is terrible, it is born of pride and excitement, it is egoism, it has self-esteem as its essence and it is hard to cross over by those of sinful deeds.

Removing a man's joy, it gives him sorrow and causes him fear, deluding him again and again.

This mean defilement, O Dhanañjaya, is ever looking for an opening by which to enter. It springs from *rajas* and is a delusion and disaster for mankind.

The English rendering of Abhinavagupta's gloss on these verses follows:

(1) Now the verse beginning *bhavaty eṣa*. What is the cause of its arising and for what reason does it grow? What is its true nature? Having arisen and become firmly established what does it do? This is the question.

(2) To this the Lord gave answer. It is subtle, not perceptible to the senses at the time of its arising. And, similarly, when present it seems to control one's happiness. But in reality it consists of sorrow and delusion because of its *tāmasa* nature. That is why it deludes.

(3) Now the verse beginning with *kāma*. Haughtiness is the pride of lineage etc., the joy arising from the thought "I am such and such."[10] Therefore it is said egoism, etc. Thus its nature is self-esteem; it grows with pride, and it arises from thoughts of happiness. Here three questions have been answered.

(4) Not glossed independently.

(5) Now the verse beginning *sa eṣa*. It looks for openings, thinking, "by means of this opening I will destroy his chances both in this world and the next." As it is said in the *mokṣadharmāḥ* (viz. MBhār. 12.288.27): "Whatever a wratful person sacrifices, or gives in charity,

[10] For *'ham ādṛśa* read *'ham idṛśa*.

whatever penance he performs or whatever he pours as oblation: the Lord of Death[11] deprives him of all. The efforts of a wrathful person are futile." It proceeds from the quality of *rajas* and has the form of *tamas*: this is what is meant. By these three examples[12] it is shown that anger is of violent attack(?), causes one to do wrong actions, and resides in shameful places.

III. 39

[The commentary here is corrupt. For *ayam iti* one should read *āvṛtam iti*. But something has dropped out of the sentence which follows.] It is in the form of desire because it operates in one's wishing (for things). By it [one's knowledge is covered] as if by an insatiable fire, that is, a fire that one cannot satisfy because it feeds on both the visible and invisible.

III. 40

He now speaks of the way to prevent this (beginning with the verse) *indriyāṇi* etc. At first, it takes its stand in the senses, just as an enemy, seen with the eye, generates one's anger [first] in the area of the [ocular] sense. It then becomes productive in the mind, and then in the *buddhi*, that is, the organ of judgement. Producing delusion in this way it destroys knowledge.

III. 41

[In commentary on this verse Abhinava treats the form *prajahīhi* (such as the Kashmir reading) or *prajahihi* (vulgate) in a very strange manner. Most Europeans have taken the form from *pra-han* 'to slay.' But by Pāṇinian grammar it can come only from *pra-hā* 'to leave,' the imperative from *pra-han* being *prajahi*. So most Indians take it from *pra-hā*. But Abhinava segregates the final *hi*, glossing it as *yataḥ* (because). This would leave him free to take *prajahi* as "kill." But he does not do so. He still glosses the verb as *tyaj* (leave).] [D.H.H.I.]

Therefore one must first restrain the senses. One must not accept anger when it first arises in the senses. Since (*hi* = *yataḥ*) it destroys

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[11] Read Vaivasvatas.

[12] It is hard to see what Abhinava means by "these three examples." Is he referring to the last three adjectives of inserted verse number 5, or has something dropped out of his commentary? Nor is it fully clear what he thinks the examples teach.

knowledge and understanding of *brahma*, that is, (all) godly activity, therefore leave (*tyaj*) wicked anger. Or one may explain [*jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam*] as adverbial, thus "having destroyed, or demolished, it (viz. anger) by one's *jñāna*, that is, one's mind, and by one's *vijñāna*, that is, one's *buddhi*." The general meaning is that one should refuse to accept the mental image produced by the senses, or should refuse to judge by it even if it has been formed.

III. 42

The technique for this is given by the two verses (beginning with) *indriyāṇi*, etc. Since the senses are different from the object of the senses, which is like an enemy, and the mind different from them, and the *buddhi* different from even that and since the *ātman* has an existence separate even from the *buddhi*, why should anger born of the senses, disturb the mind, the *buddhi* and the *ātman*? This one should reflect on. This is what is meant.

III. 43

The meaning of the secret doctrine here is as follows. That which is beyond the *buddhi*, the supreme Self-assertion,[13] 'I am everything,' the nondual *ātman*: that is the acme of non-duality. Therefore because that which is perfect cannot have any division (*khaṇḍana*), anger etc. cannot arise [in it]. Therefore taking hold of the supreme Self-assertion, which has supreme courage and is of the nature of self-realization (*saṃvit*), kill anger, which is an enemy and of the nature of ignorance. May this (undertaking) be auspicious.

In respect to this chapter, there is the following summary verse.

> He who approaches (his) wealth, his wife and his physical body as if they were other than himself: what can anger etc., the disturbers of the mind, do to him?

Here ends the third chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya*, Abhinavagupta.

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[13] The term *paro 'haṅkāra* seems to have this special sense here and just below (*param ahaṅkāram*).

CHAPTER IV

IV. 1-2-3

The Lord said [the three verses beginning with] *imaṁ vivasvate, evaṁ paramparā* and *sa evāyaṁ mayā*. [These verses are now glossed.] And this knowledge, although received through a regular succession of preceptors is now lost; by this the Lord shows the difficulty of receiving and the importance of this knowledge. Now the line beginning with *bhakto 'si me sakhā ceti*: you are my devotee and my supreme friend. Here (the use of the particle) *ca* (i.e., and) indicates "incidental addition." The following meaning is intended: just as on going out for alms-gathering it is the alms which are primary and the bringing home of a cow (if one comes by one) is secondary, so also it is devotion towards the preceptor here which is primary and not friendship.

NOTE: Anvācaya and *anvācaya-śiṣṭa* are terms used by the grammarians (cf. Kāśikā on 3.1.11, 7.3.119 etc.). Normally the word *ca* connects two items of equal importance. When, on the other hand, the second item is added as an afterthought, as an incidental or secondary thought, *ca* is said to denote *anvācaya*. The stock example is *bhikṣām aṭa gāṃ cānaya* (*Kāś*. 2.2.29): "make your round for alms and bring back a cow (if you are lucky enough to receive one)." Abhinava's so interpreting the *ca* in IV.3 is of interest. It implies that any living devotee has the same access to God's message as had Arjuna. Devotion is the criterion, not one's personal identity.

IV. 4

Arjuna, although knowing the true nature of the Lord, asks [the question in the verse beginning with *aparam*] in order to make it evident to the world.

IV. 5-9

Now the verses beginning *bahūni me vyatītāni, ajo'pi, yadā yadā, paritrāṇāya* and *janma-karma*: the Lord, although without any contact whatsoever with a physical body on account of possessing the six qualities in perfection,[1] being compassionate, brings forth an *aṃśa* (an emanation?) of His *ātman* (or Himself) because He is the sustainer of the universe. The *ātman* possesses the six qualities in perfection;

[1] I.e., *jñāna, aiśvarya, śakti, bala, vīrya* and *tejas*.

He assumes a body, which is a self-emanation in which he is chiefly concerned to help the world.

NOTE: The difficulty is this: God's *ātman* has no *samparka* with *śarīra*. But *śarīra* is an *aṃśa* of God's *ātman*. The point seems to be that God does not join with a body as a result of *karma* (as humans do), but emits his body as an instrument for saving the world.

IV. 9

Therefore His birth (i.e., God's embodiment on earth) is divine. Because it comes into being not through *karma* but through the *māyā* of the *ātman*, through *yogic* wisdom and by the power of His own free will. And His *karma* is also divine because of its incapacity to incur fruits.[2] He who comes to realize this truth and holds the same with respect to his own self (soul), he surely knows the truth about Lord Vāsudeva.

IV. 10

Now the verse beginning *vīta*: and, moreover, many knowing (themselves) thus, free from anger etc. because all their desires have been fulfilled on account of being devoted to me, (and) performing obligatory actions which bear no fruit, have attained to my true form.

IV. 11-12

Wherefore [the two verses] beginning *ye yathā mām* and *kāṅkṣantaḥ*. Whosoever seeks refuge in Me with whatever understanding (they have of my nature), I oblige them by assuming that very form towards them. Thus those who are devoted to me as well as those who are not devoted to me, all indeed follow my path.

The *jyotiṣṭoma* etc. (i.e., the Vedic rituals), are not a different path; they are my express wish, for the text goes on to say *cāturvarṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam*, "the world of the four *varṇas* was created by me." Others say that in the word *anuvartante* (IV.11) the indicative mood has been used here in the sense of the optative, as is seen in the statement: "They perform (the rite called) *ṣoḍaṣin*" during *Atirātra*,[3] where what is meant is: they should perform (the rite called *ṣoḍaśin*). Similarly here for "all follow me," one should understand "all should follow me." Only in the world of mortals and nowhere else is perfection

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[2] For *phaladāna* read *phalādāna*?

[3] *Atirātra* is "an optional part of the *jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice."

characterized by both enjoyment (of worldly pleasures) and (the attainment of) salvation.

IV. 13-15

Now the verses beginning *cāturvarṇyam*, *na māṁ karmāṇi* and *evaṁ jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma*: how can *karma* touch (lit. smear) me, who am like pure air (that nothing can touch)? The simile of air has been given because God is free from desire. He who takes refuge in the Lord with the following kind of understanding is not bound by actions.[4] "Everywhere, always, it is God alone, a single mass of bliss; there is nothing beyond Vāsudeva": he who reflects in this manner, for him there is no *karmic* bondage. Therefore, purified by this understanding, do you too perform such actions as must be performed.

IV. 16-17

Next it is said: it is not the fact that action alone leads to salvation. Wherefore [the two verses beginning] *kiṁ karma* and *karmaṇo hy api*. The distinction between what is action and what is not action is hard to understand. For even in the performance of (proper) action evil action is present as in the killing of the victim in the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice. Moreover, there is good present even in wrong (forbidden) action as in saving people from suffering by killing criminals. Besides, even when one is (physically) doing nothing, both good and evil action is being performed by speech and mind because actions of that sort cannot be avoided except by knowledge. Therefore even the wise do not know what *karma* is on account of its mysterious nature; whether by this good action our good will come about and whether by not performing these actions our salvation will not be achieved. Therefore that which is about to be spoken of, and which is capable of burning up the fuel of all *karma* good and bad, must be sought: this is what the Lord means.

IV. 18

To explain that, (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] *karmāṇi*: he who sees the absence of action (*karma*) in his own actions because of the absence of the sense of agency (i.e., that he is the agent), (and who) by having calmed his passions realizes that his non-action, (if) performed by others, is really performed by himself: he alone

[4] Construed from the verse glossed i.e., IV.14(d).

is fully wise amongst all; he acts in full, in every (sense). So how could any fruit (retribution) be given him for any action? Even in the case of the retribution that has now arisen (that is in a ripe state) he cuts off, severs, the *karmas* (from himself). So he either performs all actions or he performs none: this is the supreme secret. (He is wise) who sees in all of his activity of body and sense[5] the absence of action, the non-involvement of his *ātman*, so that he feels "my (senses) such as the sense of hearing work upon (the elements) such as the air; my voice etc. upon speech, etc.; what has all this to do with me?". And in his non-action, that is, in action such as worship etc. performed by other conscious agents, he generates (his) action (*karma*) in their activity of worship, realizing "I am identical with all these agents," on the basis of which the adept (*siddha*) has said: "worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship acts of (all) worshippers." Such a person alone is wise among ordinary men. He alone may perform any action because he sees that the agent is (only) the body and the senses and sees that his *ātman* is wholly without action. It was by identifying himself with other agents that the venerable Somānanda stated, "I am not pleased by (my) performance of worship; nor am I distressed by (my) non-performance. Worship is the constant, undifferentiated worship acts of (all) worshippers." Now how can the performance of action by others be regarded as action performed by oneself? One will not grant that the food eaten by someone else has been eaten by oneself. Therefore how can it be said "he who sees action in his non-action (is indeed wise)"? Such an objection is amiss because such matters (as the actions of others) *are* of concern[6] to the man of knowledge. To him who possesses perfected, unshakable wisdom (*vijñāna*) other objects of knowledge and other perceivers of these objects are of immediate concern in many ways. Just as the same 'I' who cognizes the jar etc. may cognize a piece of cloth etc., so may one adept of knowledge know all the objects of knowledge cognized by Caitra, Maitra, etc. Therefore has the absence of any distinction between worshippers been stated by the revered sage Vasiṣṭha. And thus (the clause beginning with) *akarmaṇi* is well said indeed. [D.H.H.I.]

IV. 19

Therefore actions, performed after giving up the thought of desires,

[5] The Text is corrupt. For *sarve karmaṇi* read *sarvakarmaṇi* or *sarvasyām*.

[6] For *abhisaṃdhānam*: "motive, aiming at, concern," cf. Abh.G. on Gītā II.5-6.

that is, of desired fruits of actions, burn out having entered the fire of knowledge, whose nature has been described and will (also) be described (later).

IV. 20-21

Now the verses beginning *tyaktvā* and *nirāśīḥ*. Even though engaged in activity, that is, although directly engaged in physical action, that is, in the operation of the senses which are of use to the body, but to which the mind and *buddhi* feel no attachment.

IV. 22

Now the verse beginning *yadṛcchā*. Even having acted (he) is not bound. [In this clause] the passive form is used in the reflexive sense.[7] He binds himself on his own, acquiring the taint of longing for the fruit of action; that is what is meant. The other (interpretation, viz. as true passive) is not so good, as it would assign freedom of agency to the actions themselves, which are insentient (non-agents).

IV. 23

Now the verse beginning *gatasaṅga*: in the expression *yajñāya*, the word *yajña* has been used in the singular as indicative of a class or type. The characteristics of these sacrifices (*yajñas*) will be described (subsequently).

IV. 24

"For the sake of sacrifice" (*yajñāya*), this was said. Now its (i.e., the sacrifice's) general nature is spoken of [in the verse beginning] *brahmārpaṇam*. That *brahma*, viz. the whole universe, of which there is a reinsertion (*samarpaṇa*) into the *brahma* from which it came, is offered us an oblation (*havis*) into the brahma-fire (*brahmāgnau*), viz. the peace of perfect enlightenment, in order to increase the flame of that fire, by *brahma* (*brahmaṇā*), viz. by any ritual action. By yogic concentration (*samādhi*), which is in effect such a ritual action, *brahma* alone is to be attained, that is, to be understood, nothing else, for nothing else exists.

Or, one may construe the sentence by supplying a relative pronoun to go with the sense of *tena* (in the second half-verse), thus: That brahma-oblation, of which the destination is into *brahma* inasmuch

[7] Cf. Pāṇ. 3.1.87.

as the deities take the place of *brahma*, being offered into brahma-fire by a sacrificer who is of the nature of *brahma*, is a *samādhi* insofar as it is a means of realizing one's true nature; by *this samādhi which* is a brahma-rite no other fruit is obtained than *brahma* itself: this on the authority of [Gītā 4.11] "just as they approach me, [so do I reward them]."

It is one thing for those of restricted nature to receive a reward comparable to the limited nature (*kṛta—svabhāva*) of their ego-sacrifice. But how can those who are aware of the unlimited, perfected nature of their ego-sacrifice have any desire for such an extremely limited reward? Such is the general sense.

In this way the highest mystery is embedded in this and the following verses and we explain it despite our limited intelligence according to the tradition handed down by our teacher. We are not to be accused of perpetrating something fanciful like a painting on air without regard to the doctrine received through the main line of apostolic succession.

Here some interpreters take the oblation, the fire, the instruments of sacrifice such as ladles, etc., and the sacrificial act to qualify (particularize) the word *brahma* [i.e., they would take the verse to mean that *brahma* is nothing more than pouring an oblation into a Vedic fire from a sacrificial laddle]. Their explanation is to be set aside, as they are not trained in the tradition of the mystery.

IV. 25

Now the verses beginning *daivameva* and *śrotrādīn*. Others, practising self-restraint, observe (*parita' upāsate*) a sacrifice in their cognition of objects by making use of the *daivāni*, i.e. the senses, [*daiva* being derived from *div* to play, to sport and so meaning] "characterized by playful enjoyment," [i.e. the senses]. Examining [this cognition-sacrifice] down to its roots, they realize their true nature. They are termed *yogins* for this reason, viz. that they are always possessed of *yoga*, this suffix [*-in* being added to *yoga*] in the sense of constant attachment.[8] Others offer this sacrifice of cognizing objects by a sacrifice of the same sort into the fire of *brahma* that can never be satiated.

Such is the interpretation of some. But as the sage (Vyāsa) does

[8] *nitya-yoga* (constant attachment) is given by Patañjali on Pāṇ. 5.2.94 as one of the senses of *matup* (possessive) suffixes.

not contradict himself [as the above interpretation would have him do], we shall explain what he had in mind. Some, possessed of *yoga*, perform a *daivam* sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice of external objects, called *daiva* because it is addressed to the various deities that govern the senses. And since while performing this sacrifice they look to no reward but are guided only by the belief that it should be performed, it is said that they offer this sacrifice into the insatiable fire of *brahma*. Accordingly, those of the *daiva* sacrifice also go to *brahma*. Hence the sage will say [Gītā IV.30] "all these are knowers of the sacrifice." So also the Vedas: "the gods performed sacrifice with sacrifice" [R.V. X.90.16].

[Thus AbhG. treats the subject of the second half-verse as the same as the subject of the first. He does not tell us how he eliminates the adversative sense of *apare* ... *apare*.]

IV. 26

Others (offer) the senses in the fires of restraint. Restraint is the *manas* (mind-will). It has fires, which assume the nature of what is imparted to it, and sparks which turn up desires. Those who offer their senses into these flames are practitioners of *tapas* (ascetism).

NOTE: The process is envisaged as follows. The senses furnish the mind-will with images (e.g. wealth, beautiful women). The mind-will by assuming (*paribhāvanā*) the nature (*bhāva*) of these objects catches on fire. But if one holds the senses in the mind-will, its sparks will consume these objects.

Others offer sense-objects into the fires of the senses. These fires, if kindled by knowledge [viz. the knowledge that the sense, not the self, is the agent], burn the *karmic* result. The mystical meaning is that these (*yogins*) seek sensual objects in order to destroy the inherited instinct (*vāsanā*) of duality.

IV. 28

And moreover, as has been stated by me (in my book) *Laghvī Prakriyā*: "Enjoyment is not to be seen as different from you, the enjoyer. That which is the enjoyment is identical with the enjoyer and the enjoyed." As (has been stated) in the *Spanda* as well: "The enjoyer is always everywhere present as the enjoyed." And they place all activities, of themselves or their minds, whether belonging to the senses, to the *manas*, or to the vital airs such as come out of the mouth and nose or cause urine to flow downwards etc., for the sake of

controlling them, in the fire of single-pointed concentration called *yoga*, which blazes with perfect knowledge and which can never be satiated.[9] What is meant is that they grasp the objects of enjoyment whether, actually enjoyed or thought of, with a mind which is single-pointed to the extent of having abandoned every other concern. It has been said in the *Śivopaniṣad*: "If the reifying power of the mind (*bhāvanā*) is checked by abandoning one state and does not go on to another, it will then blossom in the state between." Thus are the sacrifices of Yoga explained.

IV. 29-32

[The text of the following passage seems to be corrupt. If one had a clear notion of the seven-fold process of self-realization through breath-control practised by Abhinava (for a confused account, see Pandey, pp. 646-648), one might try to emend. As I lack that knowledge, I must leave a larger part of the passage under marks of interrogation.]

Thus have the characteristic features of *dravyayajñas*, *tapoyajñas* and *yogayajñas* been described; and now those of the *svādhyāyayajñas* and *jñānayajñas* are described in the verses beginning with *apāna*, *apare*, *yajñaśiṣṭāḥ* and *evaṁ bahuvidhā yajñāḥ*. They sacrifice [the *prāṇa*], that is, the rising breath; this consists of sound [read *nādam* for *nāde*] beginning with '*om*' and ending with the *mātrālaya* (?source of phonemes?) [into the *apāna*], that is, the descending breath, which represents(?) the internalized state of self-bliss [*svānanda* = *nijānanda*, for which see Pandey, p. 646]. Svādhyāya is the material self. [?It unites with?] the disciple-self for the perception of *nayānaya*(?).

[But] some [sacrifice] by placing [the *apāna*] or descending [breath] in [the *prāṇa*] which is rising and by uniting it with that, abide in the teacher-self [*apavargadānātma*, literally, salvation-giving self] and in the disciple-self with minds fixed on the knowledge of *svādhyāya*. This knowledge has four forms: purification, enlightenment, entrance and unification, and it consists in self-bliss (*svānanda*) and outer bliss (*parānanda*). Therefore is inbreath spoken of first and the out-breath last. By the first part is suggested the internalization of the sense-enjoyments and by the second the loss, through the succeeding stages of *mahāvideha*(?) and *dhāraṇā*, of memory for grasping the objects of the senses. Therefore are the sacrifices of knowledge (*jñānayajñas*)

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[9] Read *'pūrayitavye* for *pūrayitavya*; the word is a stock epithet of fire.

different from the sacrifices involving of the self (*svādhyāyayajñas*). [The practitioners of *jñānayajñā*] having, by practising in the aforesaid manner, fulfilled the wishes of the material(?) self and of the disciple-self, restraining both the motions (i.e. in-breathing and outbreathing) curbing the appetite for the enjoyment of the senses, by stopping the breath (in *kumbhaka*) offer the *prāṇas*, i.e. the arising of all the activities of the mind into the *prāṇas*, i.e. joys which are *parānanda* and *nijānanda*. All of them, beginning with the practitioners of *dravyayajñas* and ending with those of *jñānayajñas* are knowers of the truth about the sacrifices (*yajñas*); and having become sinless thereby and having uprooted the great delusion of duality that resides in the Karmic impressions, they enjoy the ambrosia that is left over from the sacrifice, (that is to say) they enjoy *parānanda* which is *nijānanda* after the *svātmā* has come to rest(?). So they are sent forth in accordance with their wishes on account of being one with Brahman. But one desists for fear of revealing too many secrets by saying too much.

For those whose humors have been brought into equipoise by the great medicine of traditional instruction from a *guru* who has been won over by extreme devotion, the secret *rasa*, although it melts within them, becomes the object of esthetic enjoyment (*carvaṇa*) and the cause of relishing things as they really are. On these verses commentators have offered other explanations. Let the wise themselves examine those statements together with those given by our revered preceptor. Why say more? Why make fun of the false explanations of other commentators? We shall keep to the task at hand. All of these sacrifices have been spoken of as "the face of Brahman," that is, the door, the means (of reaching Brahman). In them (in those sacrifices) there is the acceptance of actions, knowing this you too will be freed from bondage.

IV. 33-34

Now the verses beginning *śreyān* and *tadviddhi*. Herein there is this distinction: the sacrifice enlightened by knowledge is superior to the sacrifice that consists in material things only. The suffix *maya* in *dravyamaya* suggests the sense of "mere, only,"[10] because all action is based on knowledge. Acquire that knowledge by prostration,

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[10] *mayaṭ*—*pratyaya* is Pāṇini's term for *maya*.

by devotion, by thorough questioning, that is, by logical ratiocination and arguments and counter-arguments etc., by service and repeated practice. When you become such a *jñānin*, then your own senses, when favored by (being given) objects for their perception, will point out (*dekṣyanti*) close (*upa*) to you, the truth; that is, they will enable you to read the truth. Therefore are they called *tatvadarśinaḥ*, because they reveal the truth. As has been said: "Yoga itself is the spiritual preceptor in Yogic practices (*Vyāsa-bhāṣya*), therein one's own understanding is the upholder of truth" (Yoga Sūtra 1.48). If we interpret "*jñāninaḥ*" to mean "other men possessed of *jñāna*," this would imply that it is not true that the Lord preached it Himself. If [we take] the word in this sense, [it cannot apply to Arjuna; rather,] its intention will be to set forth the rule that other people can obtain knowledge from those who possess it by prostrating before them etc., and not in just any way they please.

IV. 35

Now the verse beginning *yajjñātvā*: "in your self," that is, when it has become identical with me. *Ātmani* is in grammatical agreement [with *mayi*]. The particle *atho* is a verse-filler. The special virtue of identifying the self with God is here stated. Without this identity determinate knowledge (*vikalpa*) is impossible.

IV. 36

In order to clarify *sarvaṁ karma akhilam*, "all actions without exception," that was used in IV.33, etc. the Lord now explains *sarvaṁ karma* by stating in the first half-verse that even *adharma* will be destroyed; and explains *akhilam* by suggesting in the second half-verse that no trace of *saṃskāra* will remain.

IV. 37

Now the verses beginning *yathaidhāṁsi*, *na hi jñānena*, *śraddhāvān* and ending with (the verse that ends in) *saṁśayātmanaḥ*: efforts should be directed in such a way that the fire of knowledge be well-fuelled, with a firm hold on understanding achieved through constant practice.

IV. 38-40

For there is nothing so purifying as knowledge. The purity obtained by the acquisition of anything else is not real, this (point) is not

elaborated for fear of going beyond the context. When you have reached enlightenment (*subuddhatā*) you will realize its purity yourself. And in this faith and sacred tradition (are important) because activity directed towards that (viz. toward knowledge) comes quickly from orthodoxy (*āstikatva*) when no doubt is present. Therefore one should have faith and should show reverence to the teacher and the sacred tradition, for they destroy all doubt. For the man of doubt learns nothing because he has no faith. Therefore one should be free of doubt: that is what the sentence means.

IV. 41-42

The message spread over the entire chapter is briefly stated in two verses beginning with *yogasannyasta*, and *tasmādjñāna*. It has been considered that only through *yoga* is the abandonment of action (*karma*) possible, not otherwise, and it will be considered again as well. Rending doubt asunder, resort to *yoga*, which is skill in action, in the manner described. Therefore arise thou and do what is to be done only because it is your duty to do so.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Perform whatever action proceeds from the desires of the senses alone. By such action the deities [who are] the senses will receive welfare and be satisfied. [D.H.H.I.]

Here ends the fourth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER V

V. 1

Arjuna spoke (the verse beginning with) *sannyāsam*. "[First you have spoken of *sannyāsa* as primary and then of yoga]." [Accordingly] this is the question of one possessing doubt.

V. 2

The Lord spoke (the verse beginning with) *sannyāsaḥ*. Out of *sannyāsa* and *karma*, neither one alone is said to give salvation, but both together. The special virtue of *yoga* is that without it *sannyāsa* is not possible.

V. 3

Now the verse beginning *jñeya*. Therefore he alone is a *sannyāsin* all the time (i.e. for good), who has cast away desire and aversion from his mind. He whose thoughts have passed beyond the dualities of anger, infatuation, etc. is easily liberated.

V. 4-5

Now the verses beginning *sāṅkhyayogau* and *yatsāṅkhyaiḥ*. This is *sāṅkhya* and *this* is *yoga*: there is no such difference. These two are forever bound together. There can be no *jñāna* without *yoga* and no *yoga* without *jñāna*. Hence the oneneness of the two.

V. 6

Now the verse beginning *sannyāsas tu*. The word *tu* is used in the restrictive sense and is placed out of order [i.e. we are to take it with the second half-verse]. It is hard for him who is without *yoga* to attain *sannyāsa*, on account of the difficulty of abandoning actions as already shown. But (*tu*) that is easily accomplished by *yogins*, as has been said earlier.

V. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Now the verse beginning *yogayukta*. He whose *ātman* is the *ātman* of all creatures, no matter what he does he is not stained (or does not become attached), because by definition he is not an agent. Therefore even though (he may be) acting in such ways as seeing etc., he understands (*dhārayati* = *dhārayan* of vs. 9), that is, he realizes with firm understanding [the following]. "If the senses such as the eye, etc. are active in their own sense-fields, how does that concern me? One is not stained by the action of someone else." This is the offering of all actions into Brahman. Herein the distinguishing feature is lack of attachment. Therefore he is not stained.

And the *yogins* perform actions, because they are without attachment, with their body etc. only, which are not involved in attachment[1] and are mutually independent.

V. 12

Now the verse beginning *yukta*. (The word) *naiṣṭhikīm* used in the verse means free from rebirth.

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[1] Read *saṅgarahitaiḥ* for *saṅgasahitaiḥ*.

V. 13

Now the verse beginning *sarva*. Just as a man inside a house does not partake of the dilapidatedness etc., of the house, even so I do not partake of the *dharmas* of the body which is like a house adorned by nine window-like apertures such as the eye, etc.

V. 14

Now the verse beginning *na kartṛtvam*. Because this self, of anyone, does not do anything; and its activity (*pravṛttiḥ*) is simply automatic. Thus, of the Lord, who is identical with (pure) cognition, whose ultimate nature is illumination, bliss, and independence, and who implies (*ākṣipta*) the continuity of creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, there can be no falling off from his nature. Hence there is no agency of God apart from his being in the creator state. In the absence of agency, what works can there be? In the absence of works, what fruit and what bond of *karma* and fruit? *Karma* here means activity (*kriyā*); *karmaphala*, fruit of activity. Thus, the activity is simply the circulatory motion of the potter's wheel (under) the stick and no more. And this activity is not what is productive of the pots because the activity is contained within the cognition. From this it follows that it is only the conscious, independent, highest Lord who appears as this or that; there is no activity or fruit of activity other than he.

NOTE: The point of the comment is that nothing is *made*, nothing is created or destroyed. The world is simply an *appearance* of the creator, something that appears automatically when he is in the state of creation. Agency is nothing more than God in that state. The activities do not make anything; the whirling of the potter's wheel does not make the pot. The *idea* of the potter makes the pot. The world is the idea of God. So there can be no *karma—karmaphala*. [D.H.H.I.]

V. 15

Therefore, in the absence of action and the fruit of action, even fate and reward are not brought about by our unseen (*karma*). Having said this in the first half-verse, he substantiates it for those involved in *saṁsāra* by an *arthāntaranyāsa* (a proof by analogy): *nādatte*, etc. Sins etc. are not committed by it (the *ātman*) but are committed by one's nescience. It is because of doubt [regarding this] that in the midst of nectar one tastes poison.

V. 16

Hence (the verse beginning with) *jñānēna tu*. After ignorance has been destroyed by knowledge, the supreme self-luminosity and self-validity of knowledge, after doubt has ceased, like the sun after darkness is destroyed, confers immortality of its own accord.

V. 17

And this is appropriate for those whose minds and intellect are set on that [viz. knowledge] to the exclusion of all other activity. To explain this idea, the Lord says (the verse beginning with) *tad-buddhayaḥ*.

V. 17A

[At this point there is an extra verse. It is found in all Kashmir manuscripts of the Gītā.]

> "Even though continually thinking of it and being in touch with it (such people) even though attached to their own action are really not bound by it, just as the rays of the sun do not stick in the mud."

V. 18

Because one's nature causes one to act thus in the world. In order to say that such is the state of those whose ignorance has been annihilated, (the Lord) says (the verse beginning with) *vidyā* etc. Thus these *yogins* do not think regarding the *brāhmaṇa* that by service etc. (of the *brāhmaṇa*) they will earn spiritual merit etc., or regarding the cow that it bestows holiness etc. Regarding the elephant they do not think of its value etc.; regarding the dog they do not consider that its impurity harms them; regarding the outcaste they are not exercised over his sinfulness, lack of purity, etc. Thus do they regard all equally, but they do not act thus in their worldly conduct. It has been said, [the soul] whose nature is pure consciousness is present in all bodies, there is no distinction within it. Therefore he who cherishes (*bhāvayan*) everything that is pervaded by it breaks [the bonds] of transmigration. Herein too, by the word *bhāvayan* this same flow of *jñāna* is spoken of.

[For V. 19 see VI. 9]

V. 20

And such is the attitude of this [man of knowledge], viz. as spoken

of (in the verse beginning with) *na prahṛṣyet*. For him who regards all equally, the distinctions of friend, foe, etc., are only for practical purposes, not in his heart on account of its being firmly established in Brahman.

V. 21, 22

Now the verse beginning *bāhyasparśeṣu*. He who is not attached to external contact, that is, to the objects of sense thinks thus: this is spoken of in (the verse beginning with) *ye hi*. He regards (them) thus: All the enjoyments of external sense objects are a cause of sorrow. Not only that; they are also ephemeral.

V. 23

Now the verse beginning *śaknoti*. Nor is it difficult to achieve. If the force of anger and passion is forborne even for a moment before one dies, lasting happiness is obtained.

V. 24

Now the verse beginning *yo'ntaḥ*. "Within" means within himself; "happiness," which is not dependent on external things. There he takes his pleasure and he finds his light. But in practical affairs he is as if stupid, (for *tv amūḍhatvam* read *tu mūḍhatvam*), for it has been said: let him move about as if dumb, disputing not.

V. 25

Now the verse beginning *labhante*. This is attained by those whose knots of dualism and doubt have been destroyed.

V. 26

The verse beginning with *kāmakrodha*. That their existence in the ultimate sense is *brahma*, is present to them in every way at all times; it does not depend on (i.e. is not limited to) the period of *yogic* repression.

V. 27

Now the verse beginning *sparśān*. Casting off the external (sense) impressions: that is to say, not accepting them; having placed all the senses, here indicated by the (use of the word) 'eye,' between the right and the left eyebrow, that is to say, in a special state (lit. place) free from anger and attachment; having established the *prāṇa* and

the *apāna*, that is, *dharma* and *adharma* evenly in the centre of the mind, let him thus sit. The word *nāsā* means the mind, because the mind acts crookedly (*nasate*), without equanimity, under the influence of anger, etc. Just this on the outside.[2]

V. 28

Now the verse beginning *yatendriya*. Such a *yogin* even though carrying out all worldly transactions, is indeed emancipated.

V. 29

Now the verse beginning *bhoktāram*. Among the rewards of sacrifice is the enjoyer [Himself] because He is so great a reward.[3] Thus, a *tapasvin*, discovering that such is the true nature of the Blessed One, is freed irrespective of his condition.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> He who regards all creatures with equanimity, even if he be like a man of no intelligence in practical affairs, is fit for salvation.

Here ends the fifth chapter of Gītārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya*, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER VI

VI. 1, 2

The Lord spoke (the verse beginning with) *anāśrita*. The meaning developed through the previous chapters is now declared in two verses. *Kāryam* (means action) prescribed by one's caste, etc. The two (words) *sannyāsin* and *yogin* are synonymous. Therefore (the Lord) says (the verse beginning with) *yaṁ sannyāsam*. Thus, without *yoga*, *sannyāsa* is not possible. Similarly, one cannot practise *yoga* without abandoning personal intention. Thus *yoga* and *sannyāsa* are always clearly related. By *na niragniḥ* etc., the following meaning is suggested: he does not stop tending the *agnihotra* fire, he does not stop practising ritual. (Even so) he is *sannyāsin* (one who has renounced everything): this is indeed marvellous.

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[2] (?I suspect the last sentence is a corruption, perhaps for *etad evaṁ vyākhyeyam*: "The passage is to be interpreted thus.")

[3] I am not sure that this is the meaning.

VI. 3

Although it has been said that *sannyāsa* (the giving up of the personal intention) is not possible for him who has given up action only, on the reasoning that a kingdom without a king[1] is destroyed, even so (the Lord makes a distinction in the verse beginning with) *ārurukṣoḥ*. Action should be performed by the sage possessed of knowledge [when he wishes to attain *yoga*]. *Kāraṇa* or cause is that which brings about or leads to something. *Śama* or tranquility, is continuance in the state of attainment. *Kāraṇa* here means mark or characteristic.[2]

VI. 4

This same meaning is illuminated (in the verse beginning with) *yadā hi*. By objects of the senses are meant objects of sensual enjoyment, by action, actions aimed at them, that is, in order to obtain sensual enjoyment.

VI. 5, 6

One must give close heed to this idea (as is said in the verses beginning with) *uddharet* and *bandhur ātmā*. Here there is no means other than oneself, that is, other than one's own mind. When subdued the mind is a friend and rescues one from the horrors of transmigration. But unsubdued it acts like an enemy causing one to fall into the pains of hell.

VI. 7, 8

Therein such is the condition of one who has successfully subdued the mind: (one and a half hemistichs of the verse are now quoted).[3] Utterly tranquil (*praśānta*), (that is) without egoism; having a frame of mind which does not distinguish among outer things between those that may be cold or hot, etc. to oneself, with no attachment and aversion. *Jñānam* means correct knowledge; *vijñānam* means that wherein knowledge of various kinds is present. [The last clause of the comment is corrupt.]

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[1] Just as a kingdom without a king is destroyed, so *sannyāsa* without someone performing it is destroyed.

[2] In achieving *yoga*, action is a cause; after achievement, tranquillity is a mark of the person who has attained this state.

[3] One should read: *jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya parātmasu samā matiḥ śītoṣṇasukha-duḥkheṣu ....*

VI. 9

Now the verse beginning *suhṛd*. *Suhṛd*: one who harbors a good heart, *mitra*: the friendship of a *mitra* is mutual; the enmity (of an *ari*) is reciprocal. One who lacks both of these (friendship and enmity) is "indifferent." One who is part friend, part enemy is a 'neutral' (*madhyastha*). A rival (*dveṣya*) is one who deserves hatred but to whom one cannot show hatred. A relative (*bandhu*) is one related by birth etc. (The *yogin*) regards all these with equanimity. So also, saints and sinners. And he excels, that is, step by step, he goes beyond *saṁsāra*.

VI. 9 [See V. 19, Abhinava reads this verse of the Fifth Chapter here in the Sixth. Three of the Śāradā mss. of the Critical Edition agree with this order.]

(What is achieved) by such people, that is, people of worthy conduct, (is described in the verse beginning with) *ihaiva*. Right here, even while connected to the physical body, they overcome *saṁsāra* by their equanimity. *Saṁsāra* cannot fetter those who have achieved *jīvanmukti*. They are firmly fixed in the experience of oneness (*sāmya*). And Brahman is oneness.

VI. 10, 11

One who has subdued his mind has been spoken of (VI.7), but how does he subdue it? Suspecting such a question, the author teaches a method of discipline of the mind, raising it from the body, for one who wishes to scale [the spiritual heights] (in the verse beginning with) *yogī*. He should discipline himself and his mind by making them single-pointed. Continuously (*satatam*), that is, not for a limited duration. He should practise *yoga* only in secluded spots etc., not otherwise. By his firmness of posture his body[4] will be firm, and from this his mind will become firm.

VI. 12

(The compound *yatacittendriyakriyaḥ* is to be analyzed as follows:) by whom the activities of the mind, that is, its imaginings (*saṃkalpāḥ*), and other activities of the senses have been brought under control.

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[4] For *kālasthairye* read *kāyasthairye*.

VI.13

Holding with effort (this is how the word *dhārayan* should be understood). Looking at the tip of one's nose involves not looking in any direction.

VI. 14, 15

(What *yukta āsīta matparaḥ* means is:) he should sit practising *yoga* with his mind concentrated on me. As he unites himself (*yuñjataḥ*), that is, concentrates himself (*samādadhataḥ*) thus, peace will come to him. In this state the highest point is attainment of me.[5]

VI. 16, 17

Now the verse beginning *nātyaśnatas*: "of one not over-eating": ["eating" means any] activity for the enjoyment of food (*āhāra*), that is, of sense objects that are brought to (*āhriyamāṇa*) one. Therefore[6] *yoga* consists in the absence of over-attachment and over-avoidance. Thus in all things [i.e. not only in the pursuit of sense-objects but in all activities]. The rest is clear. "Waking and [sleeping]" should be — ? —. The same elsewhere.[7]

VI. 18

This is the mark of the *yogin*; restraining the mind within himself he covets nothing whatsoever.

VI. 19

Now the verse beginning *yathā*. The *yogin* does not waver, as a lamp does not flicker in a windless place. His (the *yogin*'s) wavering would consist of efforts to secure sense-objects etc.

VI. 20, 21

Now the nature of that Brahman, which is his own very self, is described by a number of adjectives. It is different from what its form is imagined to be in other philosophies (*tīrthāntara*). (It is that wherein) the mind, restrained, ceases to operate; wherein the self by itself experiences supreme felicity because of the absence of the impurity caused by sensual objects.

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[5] The text seems to be corrupt.
[6] Read *tasmāc ca* for *tasyāś ca*.
[7] The text seems to be corrupt.

VI. 22

By other gain (*aparaṁ lābham*) is meant union with wealth, wife and children. The idea of pleasure [in these], which are other than *yoga*,[8] ceases, for they are of material nature. (The *yogin*) is not shaken in any special way, but rather, on account of pre-existent mental impressions, there is an initial momentary agitation on account of pity etc., but not (on account of) ignorance.

VI. 23

'Alas, I am done for'; 'What should be done by me?' (that *yoga*) whereby one becomes freed from association with sorrows such as these (is the meaning of the expression *duḥkhasaṁyogaviyogaṁ yogam*). That (*yoga*) should be practised with determination, that is, with faith generated by right belief, wholeheartedly. (The expression *anirviṇṇacetāḥ* refers to) one whose mind feels no distaste once the goal has been reached, but feels intense distaste for the many sharp pains of *saṁsāra*.

VI. 24

The way to give up the means of desire is to give up imagining. This is said (in the verse beginning with) *saṅkalpa*.

VI. 25

One should slowly (attain quietude) by (subduing) the mind and not by ceasing to act. Taking hold of the mind, step by step, having reduced the sorrow caused by (vain) desires, one should give no thought to the abandoning or grasping of sense-objects. The explanation given by others, that one should not think at all, does not appeal to us. Because it would imply the *śūnyavāda* doctrine (of the Buddhists which we reject). Nor is this stated on the supposition that a complete cessation of sense-objects occurs.

VI. 26

Now the verse beginning *yato yato*. As the mind turns back from any given object, one should immediately thereupon bring it to rest in the self.

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[8] The text is corrupt! One wants something like *saṃniyogaḥ, labdhe ca yogād anyatra sukhadhir nivartata iti*.

VI. 27

Otherwise, the mind, if not made firm, will resort again to sense-objects. There, in the *ātman*, happiness, the subject, [comes to] the *yogin*, object, whose mind is at peace.

VI. 28

In this way Brahman is attained easily by the *yogins*, and not by painful *yogic* practices etc.; this is what is meant.

VI. 29

Now the verse beginning *sarva*. He should identify the *ātman* with all beings, inasmuch as it enters them as the perceiver. And he should unite all beings within the *ātman* through the knowledge of their being the perceived. That is how omiscience arises, and *yoga* (unification). This in brief is what is meant. The details have been discussed by me in the *Devīstotravivaraṇa*, in the section refuting pluralism, and may be ascertained there.

VI. 30

The same meaning is clarified (in the verse beginning with) *yo mām*. "Perish" means "fail to accomplish its effect." That is to say, from him who does not see the all-pervasive form of the supreme soul, the supreme soul flees; because its form is not made manifest. But he who [sees] all things as entered into the supreme soul which reflects them, [for him?] it shines forth.[9]

VI. 31

He who does not see thus is lost to the nature of reality, because the truth shines forth only by the opposite procedure. I am not lost to him who sees me everywhere, because I shine forth to him in my true nature. If he sees all beings in me then they can be reflected, his power of being a seer is fulfilled, and he is not lost to the supreme soul.

VI. 32

He who is thus possessed of knowledge, knowing God to be necessarily present everywhere on account of His identity with everything, is not smeared (by *karma*) situated in whatsoever condition he may be.

[9] Something seems to have been omitted from the text.

He regards the joys and sorrows of all as similar to his own, this nature (of his) has been spoken of so no new procedure is involved here.

VI. 33, 34

Arjuna spoke (the verse beginning with) *yogam*. By the expressions *yaḥ* (which) and *ayam* (this), expressive of what is remote and what is proximate (respectively) this is indicated: that mind, which is meant for immersion in Brahman, as clearly and directly stated by the Lord in uninterrupted sequence, is removed far away by the wickedness of mental fickleness and thus being made remote it becomes agitated with regard to the present and the future (or the visible and the invisible realms) and is not manifestly capable of being maintained in the attitude of being a (mere) witness.

VI. 35

Herein the Lord said in reply (the verse beginning with) *asaṁśayam*. Through detachment the longing for sense-objects is destroyed. By (persistent spiritual) practice the *mokṣa* aspect (is strengthened). They are gained possession of one after the other, hence the enumeration of both. As has been said by the Commentator (Patañjali) in this respect, "the restraining of the modifications arising in the mind depends on both." Hence the affirmation. (See Yogasūtra I. 12).

VI. 36

In no way can *yoga* be attained by one who is not self-controlled and detached. By self-controlled is meant one who is detached, hard-working, persevering, having adopted the methods laid down in many canonical scriptures[10] etc.

VI. 37, 38, 39

Arjuna spoke (the verse beginning with) *ayatiḥ*. (By *śraddhayopetaḥ*, one with faith, is meant one) whose faith is not shaken even when the mind has been dislodged from the *yogic* state to which it had attained. One who has lost faith renders everything fruitless even if accomplished in *yoga*. It has been said: 'When knowledge, even though acquired, is corrupted by mental confusion it is quickly destroyed right then like a pile of cotton by fire.' Thus, is it that although

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[10] Or in the class of scriptures designated *siddhānta* etc.

duly accomplished in *yoga* he is destroyed because he has not merged in Brahman having duly left the world or is it that he is destroyed because he is not firmly rooted in Brahman because of some obstacle in the other world, this is the question.

VI. 40

Herein the decision of the Lord is spelled out (in the verse beginning with) *pārtha*. There is no destruction in store for one who has fallen from *yoga* either in this world or in the next. Because his faith is intact, this is the idea. (The compound *kalyāṇakṛt* is to be understood as follows:) he (who) performed the meritorious deed, which has the characteristic of being a pathway to God. (The fruit of) that (path) is not perishable like that of the *agniṣṭoma* etc.[11]

VI. 41

(The expression *śāśvatīh samāḥ* refers to) the time-span of the eternal Viṣṇu, that is, the three years of Viśṇu.[12] (Now the expression) *śucīnām* is glossed. (It should be taken as) referring to those whose minds are in touch with a part of God.

VI. 42

Now the verse beginning *athavā*: if his (approach towards) *mokṣa* is going to continue, then he is indeed born in a family of *yogins*. Therefore it is said, it is harder (to be born in a family of practising *yogins* than in a wealthy family because) in the house of the rich there are bound to be many obstacles to the attainment of *mokṣa*.

VI. 44, 45

Indeed, he is led by that previous practice (of *yoga*) perforce towards the practice of *yoga* (in the new life) like one helpless, under another's control. He goes beyond Vedic lore not just in the ordinary way by being inquisitive after the manner of (or about) *yogins* (instead of being inquisitive about the Vedas) but he also goes beyond it in the sense that he does not conform to meditation on Vedic *mantras*

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[11] Cf. Bhagavadgītā IX.20-21.

[12] That is, three divine years on the calculus of one kalpa = a day = 4,320 million earthly years and the year containing 360 such days and nights. The implication clearly is that the use of the word *śāśvata* does not refer to an eternal but a finite duration of time.

etc. (but resorts to *yogic* meditation instead). Thereafter, after satisfying his desire to know (the way of the *yogins*); diligent, through gradual practice, he attains to Vāsudeva on the dissolution of his body. He does not attain to salvation in that very body, this ought to be noted. It should also be considered that he has practised (*yoga*) through several lives. Therefore, he should be identified as one fallen from *yoga* (a *yogabhraṣṭa*) who is exclusively devoted to God.

VI. 46

The primacy of *yoga* is spoken of (in the verse beginning with) *tapasvibhyaḥ*. The superiority (of the *yogins*) over the *jñānins* lies in this that *jñāna* leads to *yoga*. (He is) superior to *karmayogins* (as) he (the *yogin*) alone really knows how to act. Nor does salvation consist in mere godless *karmayoga*, this is said.

VI. 47

Now the verse beginning *yoginām*: among the *yogins* he is the best who, suffused with God, having placed me in his heart, full of devotion and faith, worships me alone and none else in the manner of his sect learnt by serving the lotus-feet of the Master. Thus is the overall superiority of theistic *jñāna* proclaimed, which is all to the good.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Everything is obtained by merely obtaining the name of the Lord. Rice (plants) blossom(ed) duly at the (mere) sight of rain.

Here ends the sixth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER VII

VII. 1

The Lord said [the verse beginning with] *mayyāsakta*.

VII. 2

Now the verse beginning: *jñānaṁ te'haṁ*. *Jñāna* and *vijñāna* are (identical with) knowledge and action, therefore nothing remains (to be said once they have been spoken of), on account of all that is to

be known being firmly fixed in knowledge and action (i.e. knowledge and action encompass all that is worth knowing).

VII. 3

Now the verse beginning with *manuṣyāṇāṁ*: not everyone is capable of (attaining to) this reality; because it is difficult to attain, it is said: 'strive with diligence'.

VII. 4, 5

Now the verses beginning with *bhūmiḥ* and ending with *apare'yam*: that (*prakṛti*), which, being manifestly seen by all in the state of *saṁsāra*, although (constituting) a unity, divides eightfold. Because of originating from a single *prakṛti*, the universe is also a single entity —thus non-dualism (at the level) of materialism is also demonstrated. She (i.e. *prakṛti*), upon resorting to the life-principle, the *puruṣa*, becomes *parā* (*prakṛti*). She too belongs to me indeed and to none else, possessing both the forms (*parā* and *aparā*) and diversified by projecting the phenomenon consisting of (the duality) of) subject and object. This is the *prakṛti*, which, without any exception, ever, is in essence of one's own true nature, being the ground of all states that are perceived on the clear surface of the mirror of one's *ātman*. By (saying) "I am that," the Lord, (indicates that) although distinct from *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* and what is beyond the *puruṣa*, (he) is always omnipresent. The absence of any contradiction between *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* is thus demonstrated. By [the syntagm] *idaṁ* is meant the earth, etc.

VII. 6

Now the verse beginning *etat*: *upadhāraya* that is, realize it (lit. bring it in the presence of the Self) through constant practice (leading to) actual experience.

VII. 7-13

Now the verses beginning with *mattaḥ* and ending with *avyayam*. Understand it thus that I, having become Vāsudeva, am the origin and dissolution of all. 'As rows of gems on a string'—I am present everywhere just as the thread is present on account of being concealed within, without its form being perceived.

NOTE: to get the full force of the last statement a tightly woven string

of gems should be visualized, wherein the thread is invisible because of the absence of interstices between the gems.

VII. 8

[Now the syntagm ending with] *apsu* is glossed (i.e. *raso'ham apsu*). I am that generic (sense of taste) which is being savoured everywhere and in which the distinctions of sweetness etc., have not yet arisen. Similarly, I am (the general quality of) light devoid of (the attributes of) softness or brilliance. By the expression '[I am] the sound of ether' (the) entire (range of) sound is affirmed on account of it possessing ether as its element. That sound which is solely on account of the etheric quality and is free from the entire gamut of divisions such as *saṁyoga* etc., and which is perceived by congregations of *yogins* with concentrated hearts (i.e. minds) as reaching into the deep recesses of Brahman and is called *anāhata* (is the sound of *om*) which follows the entire Vedic concourse (— this is how the syntagm *praṇavaḥ sarvavedeṣu* is to be understood).[1] That essence of God is *pauruṣa* (the quality of being a *puruṣa*) — and by its glory am I *puruṣa*: thus ensues the universality (of God).

NOTES: sarvatrāsvādyamānayoranudbhinnamadhurādivibhāgaḥ: emend to *sarvatrāsvadyamānaḥ yaḥ anudbhinnamadhurādivibhāgaḥ*.
prakāśa: the Kāśmīrī recension reads "*prakāśaḥ śaśisūryayoḥ*" for the vulgate "*prabhā'smi śaśisūryayoḥ*".

VII. 9

That which is the quality of smell in the earth, on account of the purity of its mode, is naturally pleasant. Putrid, pungent (smells) etc., (arise) on account of contact with other objects. It has been said: "Firmness (results) from the abundance of the element earth; stench from the arising of the element fire, frigidity from the abundance of the element water", etc.

VII. 10

[The word] *bījaṁ* means the subtle primeval cause.

VII. 11

By "strength devoid of desire and passion" is meant (strength) in the form of energy capable of sustaining everything. By *kāma* is

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[1] Read a period after ______ *grāmānugāmi*.

meant desire only in the form of consciousness, which does not conflict with substances in the form of pot, cloth, etc. Desire, indeed, on account of the power of the Lord, spreads everywhere, is obstructed nowhere, and is refracted by adventitious *dharmas* such as pot, cloth, etc. By worshipping it (there comes about) the *jñānin*'s (realization) of the nature of pure consciousness. It is said in the Śivopaniṣad: "Place your mind in desire or in arisen knowledge". As soon as it arises, not (after) it has spread outside—this is what is meant. Those who, abandoning this explanation explain the intent (of the verse) as (stating that) resort to *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* in a harmonious way—they are to be avoided as expounding the divine secret without knowing (the esoteric interpretation received through the) disciplic succession of the sect.

NOTE: ye parasparānupaghātakaṁ trivargaṁ sevante: compare with Kāmasūtra 1.2.1: *parasparasya anupaghātakaṁ trivargaṁ seveta.*

VII. 12, 13

[The *guṇas* such as] *sattva* etc., are pervaded by me but not I by them. Therefore one who is pervaded by the divine perceives everything as in a divine state; one who is devoted to the knowledge of the manifold objects does not attain to the divine essence—this course (of viewing things as manifold) is such as appeals to everyone. And with this intention is it said that he attains to the divine essence whose mind is favoured by supreme divine grace (*śaktipāta*)—by the knowledge that Vāsudeva is all—arising subsequent to the evenness of *karma* which has resulted from its dissipation over several lives. Not indeed is 'he a sage and a rare person" just on account of the (merely mentally adopted) point of view that 'all is Vāsudeva'. On the contrary, being thought of in this way, deluded by the *guṇas* such as *sattva*, etc., this world does not obtain the essence of Vāsudeva which transcends the *guṇas*.

NOTE: sakalamānavāvarjaka: a variant reading is *sakalamānasāvarjaka* or appealing to the whole mind.
śaktipāta: a technical term in Kāśmīra Śaivism for divine grace.

VII. 14

How come those abiding only in *sattva* etc., do not come to know the divine essence? (This is) said in the verse [beginning] *daivī*. *Deva* means one who plays; activity originating therein is *daivī* or divine

—it is mine, this is what is meant. On account of that, although *sattva* etc., are really not different from the supreme *brahman* which is pure consciousness, yet there is the perception of those various (*guṇas*) as distinct, that very *guṇa*-ship is the enjoyer and therein is the dependence on the object of enjoyment. And that form, pervaded by duality, is the form of *māyā* through being involved in *saṁsāra* one account of its mysterious indescribability(?). Therefore those who have seen the light of *brahman*, the supreme goal—seeing the universe as not distinct from it—(they) go beyond *māyā* which is characterized by the quality of the *guṇas* such as *sattva* etc., and whose very nature consists in the appearance of duality. This is the sense of the (emphatic) *eva* in *mām eva*. Those who abide in such a way as knowing only the appearance of duality, do not go beyond *māyā*. Hence it has been appropriately said, "I am not in them".

NOTE: devaḥ krīḍākaraḥ: Abhinavagupta is employing the traditional etymology for *deva*—from *div* in the sense of 'to play, sport'.

VII. 15

Now the verse beginning *na māṁ*. Those who do not honour me, even though (I) possess a form deserving of it, are evil-doers, the worst among men, dumb, demoniac, full of darkness—such is indeed the prowess of *māyā* (that overcome by it they do not honour me).

VII. 18

Now the verses beginning with *caturvidhā* and ending with *sudurlabhaḥ*: Those who worship me are meritorious. They are (of) four (kinds). All of these are excellent. Because others, of narrow minds, seek wealth etc. or removal of distress from beings with similar hand, feet, belly, and body or at most from beings less than the *ātman*. They are inferior beings compared to the *jñānin*. For with them there is this much of difference—that 'I will desire this of the Lord'. Because of the manifest appearance of duality. But the *jñānin* resorts to me alone without any sense of duality, therefore, I am indeed identical (with him). I alone am dear to him, not the fruit (of praying to me). Therefore is he one whose heart is purified by the firm resolve: Vāsudeva is indeed all.

VII. 20

Now the verse beginning with *kāmais tais*—and ending with *mām*

api:[2] Now those whose minds have been disturbed by the variegated nature of the excellent primeval desire of theirs, they—with their hearts captivated by desires worship that special deity consistent with those (desires) which is really another form of mine. Hence they obtain the desired fruit from me but it is finite. Because it is circumscribed by one's own *vāsanā*. Therefore performing sacrifices etc., with the intent of devotion to Indra etc., they obtain results accordingly. Those who seek me (obtain) me alone.

VII. 24

Now if the essence of God is all-pervasive, then how come the fruits of those who worship other gods are (of a) limited (nature)? [In answer to this is] said [the verse beginning with] *avyaktaṁ*. Indeed, on account of their narrow-mindedness, they do not recognize my ultimate form as one in which no manifestation is present but know it as possessing the special nature in accordance with the form of their own desires; not otherwise. There is no difficulty in (the matter of) name and form but in this respect there is the following principle. Whosoever resorts to the form of any god without any desire, then that culminates in pure and free Being and the opposite (culminates) in the opposite (i.e. if the form is resorted to *with* desires then it culminates in that).

VII. 25

Now the verse *nā'haṁ*: I am not visible to all.

VII. 27

Is it that actions, being performed, confer salvation at the time of universal dissolution, otherwise why does the great dissolution take place? [The verse] *icchā* etc., has its origin in this doubt. He (it?) is led to a state of supreme expansion indeed, then pervaded by delusion by (the operation of) desire, enmity, anger, infatuation, etc. Therefore the entire *jagat*, present (dormant) in every belly, resorts to sleep, only incapable of causal activity, (as if) free from delusion which is like sleeping at the time of night every day under the influence of inherent tendencies; by that logic it is not like the end of all delusion consequent upon *mokṣa* on account of the reappearance of *saṁsāra* with its various activities (again at the end of the period

[2] Emend *mayityantaṁ* to *māmapityantaṁ*.

of dissolution). Those whose *tamas* has been destroyed, whose souls have been blessed by the dissipation of good and bad *karma*, who have felled the awnings of great delusion, they come to know *brahman*, the darkness of old age and death as purged[3] by the ray of God. The *ādhyātmika*, *ādhibhautika*, *ādhidaivika* and *ādhiyajñika* forms are my transformations. They know me at the time of death because their hearts are always steeped in God. Those whose life (lit. birth) is already divine in essence, they would remember God at the time of death. Those who think what (is wrong with) repeated births,[4] it is best to be silent about them.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Devotion to God is said to be the manifest wish-fulfilling blossom by which (every) hope, consistent with the desire of the seeker, may be fulfilled.

Here ends the seventh chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya*, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER VIII

VIII. 1, 2

Arjuna said [the verses beginning with] *kiṁ tad* (and) *adhiyajñaḥ kathaṁ ko'tra*. [With the expression *dehe'smin* (in this body)] (the sense) 'is present in the body' has to be supplied.

VIII. 3

That which was alluded to by the Lord [in the statement] beginning with *te*[1] *brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnaṁ* is now explained by the Lord in detail, preceded by the set of nine questions[2] (raised by Arjuna) [in the verses beginning with] *akṣaraṁ*. The *para brahman* is (so called) both on account of its (own) expansiveness and because it

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[3] For this somewhat rare sense of *khacita* see Vaman Shivram Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965) p. 389.

[4] See Pāṇini 8.3.102 on *āsevanā*.

[1] Read *te* for *ye* in the Nirṇayasāgara text.

[2] These appear to be: (1) What is *brahman*; (2) What is *adhyātma*; (3) What is *karma*; (4) What is *adhibhūta*; (5) What is *adhidaiva*; (6) What is *adhiyajña*; (7) How is it to be known; (8) How is it present in the body; and (9) How is it to be known by the self-controlled ones when death is imminent?

causes (things) to expand. Therefore it is designated by the word *adhyātma.*[3]

That emission (*visarga*) of that *brahman*—which possesses the nature of consciousness and which on account of its manifest quality of indivisibility constitutes the *ātman* which is the inner perceiver in externally created beings, (and which) on account of the lordship of the universal *śakti* has embraced, of its own free will, and thus brought to light the external beings—is the creator, in due order, of divine beings such as *brahmā* etc., and of inanimate beings, and the illuminator of the variedness of both the animate and the inanimate. And it causes truth to arise in the case of the created being who has got rid of the entire chimera of falsehood.

VIII. 4

Now the verse beginning *adhibhūtaṁ*: A collection of objects such as pot, etc., is called *kṣara* or perishable because it perishes, wastes away, on account of its characteristic finitude. The *puruṣa*, that is the *ātman*, is *adhidaivam* because therein all the gods firmly abide. Therefore, by virtue of being the enjoyer of (the offerings) of all sacrifices without exception, as one who presides over all the sacrifices and obligatory rites—that supreme person (*puruṣottama*) am I indeed. And I am, indeed, present in the body—thus are two questions answered at one stroke.

VIII. 5, 6

Now the remaining question—'how are you to be known at the time of death'—is settled [in the verses] beginning with *antakāle'pi* and ending with *asaṁśayaṁ*.[4] Not only, indeed, does one come to me—beyond any material limitation—(thinking of me) at the time of death when one is in good health; but (the Lord) also preaches the way whereby God may be remembered by one even in bad health, (by one) who has withdrawn himself from all the activities of the senses. He, from whose heart the divine truth is never lost even in the course of all worldly pursuits, who has cast off all actions on the Lord and who is ever suffused with God, he definitely automatically remembers the divine essence (at the time of death)—and the reason for this is that he is always steeped in it. Therefore it is said that

[3] Because it becomes the *ātman* in the *jīva* as Ānanda explains.

[4] The Kāśmīrī recension reads *antakāle'pi* and *asaṁśayaṁ* for the vulgate *antakāle ca* and *asaṁśayaḥ*.

with whatever thing the innermost self is always filled, that is remembered at the time of death and that state is attained; therefore at all times be devoted to me, be desirous of me; this is the import, and not this that whatever is remembered at the time of death (i.e. whatever thought crosses the mind) that forsooth is obtained. If this be so then the prospect is indeed bleak even for the *jñānin* whose mind may be disturbed by the disorder of bodily humours and who is comatose (at the time of death). Nor is logical deduction in order here; because of its opposition to the *śruti* which is authoritative. There is (for instance the following statement): "One who has overcome sorrow attains liberation even if this memory fail him, while he is dying, be it at a sacred place or in the house of an outcaste, for he was liberated simultaneously with (the acquisition of) *jñāna*". [There is the further statement:] "He may give up his body in Kāśī or in the house of an outcaste. He, whose (*saṁsāric*) fever is over, was liberated at the time of the attainment of *jñāna*". Hence two endorsements such as these. That with which the heart is always informed, in the end, after death, that indeed is attained. This is not conditional on whether it is remembered or not (at the exact moment of death). This primary meaning has been indicated by the use of (the particle) *api*. In (the expression)—*yaṁ yaṁ vāpi*—the word *vā* expresses the idea that memory need not always be present. A person who is always devoted to me may abide any way—the sage himself makes this sense manifest.

VIII. 7

The connection between what has been said, with [the verse beginning with] *tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu mām anusmara* is as follows. Thinking constantly of whatever thought one gives up the body, one attains to that, whether one remembers it at the last moment or does not remember it because it could not be remembered. Because he is always full of that thought. Others, however (interpret the verse thus): the form he assumes is the first mental impression he forms, which is what he remembers at what is called the moment of death, when relatives, sons, etc., and other subjects can be seen, when symptoms such as heavy breathing, hiccups, choking etc., prognose the end, and when one is deluded by (alternating) signs of relief and distress caused by the emaciation of the firm frame of the body. At such a moment the cause for the arising of the memory (of God) is always having been filled with His thought. The proper form of *tyajati* is

locative (and not third person present indicative) otherwise the meaning is the same as before. Then what is the point in remembering at the last moment indeed? Who says so, that it is of any use. Is it that at the last moment only that happens which is circumstantial? Indeed, then, if at the last moment the drink of cold water, etc., fetched by son, wife or relative is seen and remembered then one may become that! Not so. By last moment is not meant the moment of obvious physical demise. The last moment we wish to talk of is not of the kind seen by you all (on the outside). At that last moment, whatever (mental) form ought to be will come to be by the logic that even a remote mental impression, even in the case of those obscured by time and space, will be regained on account of belonging to the innermost nature. Under its influence memory (will arise) and through that memory that (appropriate) condition will be attained. With some even when the body is in good health, the same happens accidentally as it described in the *purāṇa* about the deer etc., and the consequent assumption of the body of a deer.[5] Therefore "even at the time of death (remember) me" etc., is stated. Those who constantly honour God and (say) "so it has been and so will it be with us"—this mental impression of theirs prevents other mental impressions (from arising). By this, in that internal state not outwardly known, by the removal of other mental impressions one remembers the essence (of God) on account of the mental impression. And after the remembrance, for the sake of obtaining a proper condition for the body, follows the moment of the dissolution of the body. The mental impression of time being done away with, from the disappearance of the distinctions, of the 'this is to be known' etc., one becomes merged with the Lord who is of the nature of consciousness alone. This is the considered opinion of the *guru* of Abhinavagupta; more need not be said. By *asaṁśayaṁ* is meant that no doubt need be entertained in this respect.

VIII. 8

Now the verse beginning *abhyāsa*. By the expression *anucintayan* is meant that upon the separation of the body, freed from physical agony, then he thinks of God.

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[5] The reference is to well-known story of the sage who became attached to a foundling deer in a hermitage and on his death was reborn as one, as that thought of the deer haunted him at the moment of death. See Bhag P.V. 8-12.

VIII. 9

He should remember in this manner. Now the syntagm beginning with *āditya*: the quality of solar colour distinguishes the essence of Vāsudeva. Because it is beyond the darkness constituted by the ignorance consisting of the delusion of form, imagination etc., hence its sunlikeness — this is what is meant.

VIII. 10

Now the verse beginning *prayāṇa*: "In between the eyebrows" has to be understood as before.[6]

VIII. 11

Now the verse beginning *yad akṣaraṁ*: I shall speak 'with *saṅgraha*'. *Saṅgraha* is that by which there is the proper (*sam*) determination (of the means). By way of proper means I shall say the 'word': I shall tell the means in order that it may be constantly practised.

VIII. 12

Now the verse beginning *sarva-*. The doors are the senses. By the word *hṛd* is meant the absence of attachment to sense-objects and not the anus(?).[7] They place the *prāṇa*, the charioteer of the soul, through the force of will, in one's head, (that is) in that which is beyond everything: this constitutes the regulation of the body (in *yoga*).

VIII. 13, 14

(The aspirant) repeats the (mystic sound) *om* — this constitutes the regulation of speech (in *yoga*). *Mām anusmaran* ('Remembering me', by this is indicated) the single-pointedness of the mind. *Yaḥ prayāti* ('who goes' refers to him) who advances day by day, goes forth not to be re-born. Moreover, discarding the body how come he goes forth not to be re-born — so that another physical body, the abode of all miseries, may not come to be.[8] He who in this manner, with an unwavering mind, remembers me, constantly resorts to me; he comes to know my being and my form. Nor[9] is the emphasis of the sage

[6] See Bhagavadgītā V. 27.

[7] The point seems to be that the mind should be placed in the heart (i.e. the *anāhatacakra* of the Tāntric scheme) and not in the coccygeal area (i.e. the *mūlādhāra*). And further, that by placing the mind in the heart is meant the absence of attachment to sense-objects.

[8] Read '*mā bhūyāditi*' for '*mābhūgrāditi*'.

[9] Read '*natvatra*' for '*nanvatra*'.

here opposed to the suggestion of the non-duality of *brahman* upon the flight of the soul after death. For, as has been said: "The being of Śiva being (perceived as) all-pervasive, the (question of the) flight of the soul, after death is meaningless. But upon Śiva not[10] (being perceived as) all-pervasive, death does not lead to Śiva". Or in the case of those by whom, although constant practice has not been carried out, even so somehow, on account of the independent wish of the Lord etc., if at the last moment such a (God-ward) mental state comes about, then the means at the time of the passage of the soul has been described which shall block out other mental impressions. Hence the affirmation beginning with *yad akṣaram*, ending with *abhidhāsye* (i.e. VIII.11).[11] For the excellent sages have said, propounding the marvellous quality of even a momentary remembrance of the Lord as possessing the property of destroying all (*saṁsāric*) mental impressions: 'O lady whose sins have faded away,[12] if but for a moment you shall place Śiva in your heart, what will that not achieve?' Therefore, there is the negation (of the prospect of release) without the remembrance (of God) at the time of death—in order to remove the doubt of those who entertain this doubt [the verse beginning] *ananyacetāh satataṁ* has been uttered. [*Ananyacetāḥ*] means one whose mind is not set elsewhere on the attainment of some fruit (of action) etc. For him, I am easily accessible. By him no such troubles need be taken as proper worship at the time of death, pilgrimage, the sun's presence in the northern course, doubts about the sanctity of the place, purity, alertness, auspicious hour such as the equinoctial etc., (the right) day, being in an unpaved and pure spot, the freedom of the body from excretions and dirt, the wearing of clean clothes, etc. As has already been said—(whether one dies in) a place of pilgrimage or the house of an outcaste etc. (is immaterial).

VIII. 15

It was indeed said that (the spiritual aspirant) goes to my being; in this matter, suspecting the doubt: is one re-born even after attaining (to God)?, (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] *mām upetya*. From everywhere else there is rebirth, this will be propounded through

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[10] Read '*āvyāpini*' as '*avyāpini*'.

[11] In the vulgate the verse ends not with *abhidhāsye* as in the Kāśmīrī version, but with *pravakṣye*.

[12] I.e. Pārvatī.

the succeeding verse. On attaining to me, the *yogins* do not experience the misery of birth, etc. As is said in the Vedas: 'He does not return'. And it is also said later on (in this very chapter) "(Those who) attain to him return not".[13]

VIII. 16

Now the verse beginning *ābrahma*: even those who have attained to *brahmaloka* are re-born, this is how (the first line of the verse) has been explained by everyone. On taking this as true, *mokṣa* consists of attaining to the *loka* beyond (that *brahmaloka*)—this could be said to be meant, but that is not appropriate. To us, this appears to be a ravelled explanation pertaining to the *āgamas* on the part of those whose inner vision has been vitiated by doubt and great delusion. *Ābrahma* means that so long as *brahman* is not attained, till then (creatures) come back from this or that high, low or oblique world, and return roaming ceaselessly from place to place like a wheel.

VIII. 17

Now who indeed knows thus that there is rebirth from all the worlds, for *brahmā* etc., are heard of as lasting for a very long time? Hence how are they to be considered as being re-born? Even they are subject to rebirth possessing the nature of coming into being and ceasing to be—this is said [in the verse] beginning with *sahasra-*.

Those who are far-sighted,[14] they see the night and day of even Brahmā as a dissolution and creation. Thus, day after day, as they awake, they conform each to his own activities. And every night they abide as mere *śakti*, when their vibrations have subsided. In this way, there is coming into being again and again in (the process of) creation and dissolution; it is not that other (new) beings are created (at the time of a new creation) but the same living souls. The distinction which brings about a longer or a shorter cycle is occasioned by Time; and this (Time-) limitation applies to the *prajāpatis* also. Therefore they too possess the nature of coming into being and ceasing to be—this is established.

VIII. 21

There is rebirth everywhere from the *lokas* but not on attaining to

[13] See Bhagavadgitā VIII. 21. cd.

[14] Read *khalvadirghadṛśvanaḥ* as *khalu dirghadṛśvānaḥ*.

me, the supreme lord, this is clarified (in the verse beginning with) *avyakta* etc.[15] The afore-mentioned essence of Vāsudeva, which is free from the duration of time, is manifest and omnipresent but on account of its inaccessibility lies concealed within the elements. And it has been said earlier that it can be obtained through devotion (*bhakti*). And in that (essence of Vāsudeva) is placed this universe which is such as possesses always indestructible form. In this respect what then is the meaning of the word *punaḥ* (again) and of the word *āvṛtti* (return)? That (indicates that the universe), in the midst (of the essence of Vāsudeva) is capable of separation from its true nature (i.e. from the true nature of the essence of Vāsudeva). But there is never separation on the part of anyone from the nature (of God) who has attained to the being of the supreme lord who possesses a nature which is always beyond the universe, different from the universe, the seat of the universe, supreme intelligence and independent. Hence it was well-said: "On attaining to me (there is) no rebirth", etc. In this way is the condition of those people stated who by constant practice, without trouble, attain God.

VIII. 23

Now, again, something more is said about those who, through the passage of the soul after death desire enjoyment in fulfilment of their desires [through the verse] beginning with *yatra kāle*. *Anāvṛtti* means *mokṣa* (freedom from rebirth). *Āvṛtti* or rebirth is for the sake of sensual enjoyments.

VIII. 24

Uttarāyaṇa means the six months consisting of the northern i.e. higher movement (of the sun). And that, on account of it possessing the property of brightness[16] etc., it is referred to by words such as fire, etc.

VIII. 25

Therefore the opposite, conversely, is when there is rebirth for the sake of enjoying the fruits of *karma* because of the influx of the

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[15] The Nirṇayasāgara edition adds: *parastasmādityadinā* after *avyakta ityādi*, which does not seem to make sense. Hence that clause has been overlooked.

[16] Read *prakāśādidharmakasvād* as *prakāśādidharmakatvād-*.

remaining degrees of the moon.[17] *Mokṣa* is not returning from amidst these two primeval paths. Otherwise *bhoga* (involving rebirth ensues).

VIII. 26

He who knows these paths, that is, knows the due inner process by adopting the method of *yoga* (—this is what is meant). This the present work describes in detail; there is no need to say more.

VIII. 27

Therefore at all times be possessed of *yoga* O Arjuna—this is said. All the moments that are internal, with respect to them practise *yoga*. Our preceptor has said, out of compassion for everyone, having explained the secret of the moment of death (as) constituted of an internal moment, now the main topic relating to the popular external (notion of) time is summed up [through the line] *tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu* etc.

VIII. 28

'Goes beyond', that is, overcomes. On account of all the traces of *karma* being rendered ineffective by the remembrance of God, upon the cessation of all *karma* he easily obtains the supreme good.

On this chapter there is the following summary-verse:

> On account of the fact that God pervades all beings, there is no condition, inside or outside, in which the God (the pervading One) does not shine forth, once God has been realized.

Here ends the eighth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER IX

IX. 1

The Lord spoke [the verse beginning with] *idaṁ tu te*. Absence of ill-will is the main factor in the (successful) transmission of knowledge [that is why Arjuna is described as free from spite]. [The two words] *jñāna* and *vijñāna* [should be understood] as before.[1]

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[17] Read *candramasaḥ* for *candramasaṁ*. The reference seems to be astrological. In Indian astrology the degrees of the moon determine the astrological *daśā* or period at the time of birth. Or else see Chāndogya V. 10.

[1] See Abhinavagupta's gloss on Bhagavadgītā VII. 2.

IX. 2

That which shines forth among all branches of learning, which is resplendent right here—such indeed is spiritual knowledge said to be among all kinds of knowledge. [The expression *rājaguhyaṁ* is to be thus understood:] in this matter kings such as Janaka etc., are qualified [to expound]; their secret knowledge, (which) on account of its extreme secrecy, and because of its remaining unshaken (i.e. unbroken) on account of the courage which comes easily to the *kṣatriyas* is easy to follow, for it is not like the action consisting of the worship of *brahman* which suffers diminution like other *karmas* through *bhoga*.

IX. 3

Now the verse beginning *aśraddadhānāḥ*: [Those who are without faith] return, that is to say, are born and die again and again.

IX. 4

"The creatures are stationed in me"—because they are present (in me) even after being for a long time in the fixed abode of some other (god).[2] "I am not in them"—this is said because by the bringing forth of the inanimate form of that (in the process of creation) which is well-known as the *conscious* nature of created forms, there is the obscuration of that (conscious) nature which reveals the opposite of all that (i.e. of consciousness) in its (material) appearance.[3]

IX. 5

Now the verse beginning *na ca matsthāni*: Because those blinded by ignorance cannot see the truth [they do not see all created beings in me]. The ignorant ones do not regard the supreme lord, possessing the nature of undivided consciousness as the ground of and the boundary of all things. Rather, (thinking) I am the lean Devadatta, I know this (to be such and such); (here) this object is present on the surface of the earth—they see only the limited nature (of the ultimate) on account of its spatial locus. Now how come this contradiction arises? Thus it is said: Behold the power of my *yoga*. [It is

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[2] The form *vidyamānatvāt* is confirmed by the B.O.R.I. manuscript.

[3] The point seems to be that God, who is the same as the *ātman*, is pure consciousness but in the process of creation matter appears first and in that appearance the opposite nature (i.e. the conscious nature) of the created beings is obscured because of materiality. Therefore God, as pure consciousness, is no longer present in them.

called] *yoga* on account of being united with *śakti*. My glory indeed consists of this unsurpassed wonderful freedom (to act). This is what is meant.

IX. 6

Now the verse beginning with *yathā*: Notwithstanding the invariable association of sky and wind, the touching of the sky (on the part of the wind) is never indeed heard of. Similarly, although the essence of God is spread out over the entire world, it is not perceived by all.

IX. 7

Now the word *prakṛti* (in 7b): *Prakṛti*, that is, in its unmanifest form.[4]

IX. 8, 9, 10

Now the verse beginning *prakṛtiṁ*: [I 'create' the world] resorting to my own *prakṛti*. In this way, although inanimate, this concourse of beings comes to light (i.e. life) on cumulating with *paraprakṛti*. And for me there is no bondage of *karma*, because I remain present with detachment; wherefore am I the cause (of the universe), being resorted to by the process of universal creation.

IX. 11

Now the verse beginning *avajānanti*: I, who repose inside everyone, become the butt of contempt (by the ignorant) on account of being present in the form of the *ātman* in all (and am thus disregarded because of the subtle nature of this presence). How God, who is quite distinct from the fourteen kinds of creation, such as man etc., is not perceived [is described in the next verse].

IX. 12

Now the verse beginning *mogha*: Their knowledge and action, as well as desires—all are fruitless because they pertain to the unreal. [The clause] *āsuriṁ rākṣasīṁ ca*[5] (demoniac and ghoulish) [means that in such people the property of *rajoguṇa* and *tamoguṇa* predominates].

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[4] Read '*prakṛtimavyaktarūpām*' for '*prakṛtimayyaktarūpām*'.
[5] The vulgate text runs: *rākṣasīṁ āsurīṁ* etc.

IX. 13, 15

Now the verse beginning *mahātmānaḥ*: [The great-souled ones honour me] worshipping the divine (*sāttvika*) *prakṛti* with sacrifices, employing external substances. Others worship me with the sacrifice of knowledge (*jñānayajña*) alone. Therefore some (worship me) by way of unity through *jñānayoga* and some in different ways through *karmayoga*; all of them are indeed devoted to me.

IX. 16

But how can *karma* (ritual), abounding in distinctions which pervade the (entire) band of agents lead to a divine state (characterised by) the absence of distinctions? [The verse beginning with] *ahaṁ kratuḥ* is said by way of answer to this question. *Karma* (ritual) which is dependent on various means that are fashioned out of the one partless essence of *brahman*, returns again to that unity on account of the attainment of the divine state, never being far from it, through the realization of the *ātman* as the performer in all agents during the performance of ritual. As has been said: "That very *śakti* of Śiva, characterized by activity, which is an instrument of bondage when present within the soul, leads to the attainment of perfection when understood in its own way". It has been said by me too: "That very *buddhi* which when turned outward (in *pravṛtti*) conforms to the (perception of the) duality of being and non-being, when turned inward (in *nivṛtti*) leads to the absence of rebirth".[6] This point has been previously reflected on in detail in several places hence we desist here (from further elaboration).

IX. 19

"I pour out heat" etc., has been said in the context of the talk of non-duality.

IX. 20

If, indeed, in this way, *brahman* can be attained by external sacrificial observances, then in the matter of *agniṣṭoma* etc., is there not an inconsistency in admitting that another sacrifice (and not *agniṣṭoma*) be performed? If Vāsudeva alone is, then why don't they (the per-

[6] There is a pun on *bhāvābhāva*. The first time it may be read as being (*bhāva*) and non-being (*abhāva*); the second time around as the absence (*abhāva*) of being or birth (*bhāva*).

formers of *agniṣṭoma* etc.) attain salvation? For the sake of (clarifying that) is said the verse (beginning with) *traividyā*.

IX. 21

Now the verse beginning *te taṁ bhuktvā*: Although they worship me to be sure, yet because they pray only for heaven and because of the weakness of their own essence and of finite action,[7] they are cut off with merely the fruit of heaven etc. Thus they are characterized by rebirth. In this way they attain to coming and going (i.e. the repeated births and deaths of the cycle of *saṁsāra*).

IX. 22

It is not the (innate) nature of sacrifice to cause rebirths. Hence [the verse beginning with] *ananyā*. People other than those, meditating on me [who are called *ananyāḥ* in the verse], how come they have no one else in mind (i.e. are single-minded)? They are those for whom there exists no fruit to be desired other than me. [The word *yoga* in the expression *yogakṣema*] means the obtaining of that form of mine (i.e. God) which has not been obtained. The word *kṣema* in the expression *yogakṣema* means the safe-guarding of the achievement of the form of God which has been obtained. So that even the shadow of a doubt about falling away from *yoga* should not arise. This is what is meant.

IX. 23, 24

Those who worship through other names [and forms], they also worship me alone. There is nothing to be worshipped other than the *brahman*—but the special thing (about their situation is that it is done) 'without the proper rite (*vidhi*)'. 'Without the proper *vidhi*' means with another *vidhi* (or mode of worship). By rites of various kinds I, who have the same nature of being as the supreme *brahman*, am indeed to be worshipped. [The word *avidhi* is not to be understood] as it has been explained by others, who are sullied by terrible sins produced by the defects (arising from their being) of a different school of philosophy (who maintain) that by '*avidhi*' is meant 'bad or wicked rites'. If this be so then statements such as "they worship me alone",[8] "I am the enjoyer of the sacrifice"[9] plainly cannot be

[7] Read *svargamātraprārthanayā* and *mitakarmanijasattvadurbalatayā* as separate units.
[8] See Bhagavadgītā IX. 23.
[9] See Bhagavadgītā IX. 24.

reconciled: so enough of bandying words with those full of sin. Our *guru* rather explains thus. [Those who] worship some other god as different from one's *ātman*, as devoid of the nature of *brahman* on account of dualism — in reality, they worship me who is of the nature of one's own *ātman*, but "without the proper rite", with a "bad rite", i.e. by adopting a form implying duality. Therefore it is said: they do not know me really as of the nature of one's own *ātman* (but) as the partaker (of the worship) on account of the form of the god (they worship). Therefore do they fall away from me.

IX. 25

Why 'by observing the vows of the gods they go to the gods' etc.? This indeed is the 'fall' (referred to above). Those who know my form as without distinctions, they worship me alone through various sacrifices such as those to gods, creatures, manes, etc., and they being my worshippers go to me — (the Lord) will conclude thus. Now it is said that the gods are specifically named (as those) for whose sake the offering of oblations is made. Then, how come the essence of one's own nature has been established as that which is sacrificed to without any specific statement to that effect being made, (as for instance in the case) "boiled rice should be offered to *āditya*"? But such a specific mention of a name (*uddeśa*) would require another *vidhi*, but another *vidhi* can be made only if some other gods are left after the (other) injunctions (*vidhi*) have been made. But there is no *vidhi* for (worshipping) one's own *ātman* (which encompasses all the gods) — with this intent was it said: [They worship me but] not with the proper *vidhi*. A *vidhi* is necessary in the case of a god who is different rom one's own *ātman* because in this way what is not possessed by it can be offered (to it). But one's own *ātman* is the supreme lord, is not to be approached with a *vidhi* because of the absence of anything which can be offered to it through a *vidhi*. Thus its non-specification is of no account. In the specific mention of all the gods such as Indra etc., who receive due offerings, one's own *ātman*, of such a nature as accounts for the appearance of the universe, forever manifest by being present in the limited manifestations of those gods specifically addressed and who are full of eagerness for precedence, is indeed always specifically referred to being like a thread in a garland. It thus stands to reason that they worship me alone without any *vidhi* because their main interest lies in attaining to God. There is no intention (on the part of those who institute the sacrifice, the

yajamānas) for feeling that "I am the performer" of these (sacrifices), rather their success in achieving the status of Indra etc., (as a result of the sacrifice) is like that of the officiating priest obtaining his limited sacrificial fees. It is to convey this that the active voice has been used (with the root *yaj* in verse IX. 23). As has been said by me myself: "The sacrificer, sacrificing (by himself) having given up the role of one who gets a sacrifice instituted, indifferent to worldly objects and desirous of heaven comes to grief if he knows the Vedas but knows not the state (of consciousness) pertaining to Lord Śiva. All the streams of consciousness, spreading out in various directions with currents of karmic essence do not achieve their perfect fulfilment without attaining to You (O Śiva), the ocean of bliss".

NOTE: Two distinctions are important in the above passage: (1) between the *yajamāna*, one who institutes a sacrifice, and the *yājaka* who actually officiates at the sacrifice, and (2) the use of the root *yaj* in active and middle voices. In the active the root *yaj* is used with reference to the officiating of the priest, in the middle it refers to the instituting of the sacrifice by the *yajamāna*.

IX. 27, 28

He who knows thus in the aforesaid manner, in his case even the sacrifice to gods such as Indra etc., is a sacrifice to the supreme lord. Although it is a different rite, yet it assumes the form of the worship of God's own nature because it points to Him everywhere; hence is said [the verse beginning with] *yat karoṣi*. For those who worship other gods with countless desires (thereby) lessen the fruit (of their own deed but even so the fruit comes ultimately from me) therefore you offer everything to me in the manner preached earlier; regard everything as pervaded by me. This indeed is *sannyāsa yoga* (the *yoga* of renunciation). This I have declared already quite clearly and at length. This appropriate sense (of *sannyāsa yoga*) will become very well established (in your mind) on the attainment of the knowledge of God.

IX. 32, 33

Now the verse beginning *māṁ hi*: [In this verse by the expression] *pāpayonayaḥ* ('those born in wicked wombs') are meant animals, birds and reptiles; by *striyaḥ* (women) those that are ignorant, by *vaiśyas* (merchants etc.) those engaged in the occupation of farming etc. and by *śūdras* (serfs etc.) all of those who are excluded from

Vedic ritual and dependent on others for a living; even they, resorting to me, worship me indeed. When the (marvellous) deeds of the supremely compassionate God, such as the freeing of the elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile) are heard by the thousand, then what doubt can there be (of the salvation) of those of perverse conduct? Some say that this statement is meant to glorify the *brāhmaṇas* and the *kṣatriyas* and it is not intended to indicate the accessibility of salvation on the part of women etc. They (who say so), denying the all-embracing power of God with their narrow intellects; being unable to bear the supreme kindheartedness of the supreme lord, going against sentences which clearly state the intended meaning such as "I hate none and love none";[10] "even if one be terribly depraved"[11] and others; not accepting, on the strength of dualism the non-duality of the essence of God established through a host of irrefutable arguments; not noticing other scriptural contradictions (of theirs); joining issue repeatedly 'how can you say this', 'how can you say this'; with their hearts penetrated and possessed by the supreme prejudice of birth etc., which has been completely accepted; turning askance their lowered face and eyes because of enmity, dissimulation and embarrassment, prating nonsense before all,—make themselves the butt of ridicule among the people—which serves to explain everything in advance!

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> In the non-dual *brahman* there flows forth the supreme *śakti* with compassion for all. Therefore strive to obtain it.

Here ends the ninth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER X

X. 1

The meaning which was expressed through the previous nine chapters, that very meaning is elaborated again in this chapter through every and each word. And so [the Lord] says [the verse beginning with] *bhūya eva*. Listen to what is being said again to clarify what has

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[10] See Bhagavadgītā IX. 29 (b).

[11] See Bhagavadgītā IX. 30 (a).

already been said. Arjuna will also say likewise, "Tell me again"[2] — such then is the purpose of the chapter. The rest has been explained, then why the repetition? For (thereby) doubt will be resolved. So the Lord said [the verse beginning with] *bhūya eva*.

X. 4

Now the verse beginning with *buddhi*: 'Freedom from delusion' (*asammohaḥ*) [here] means energetic exertion (*utsāhaḥ*).

X. 9

[Now the verse containing the expressions] *maccittā* and *bodhayantaḥ parasparam*: Through mutual enlightenment, that is, by the transmission (of knowledge) which grows as the instruction is passed on from one to another, they all come to possess the correct understanding, that there is (but) one God (who is present everywhere) having filled (everything) by his pervasiveness. The idea is that the quality of (devotion to) the great lord (Śiva) is easily reached by them through the understanding that he is possessed of all powers, is all-pervasive and possesses the form of one's *ātman*.

X. 10-42

The comment made [now covers the verses] beginning with *teṣām satatayuktānām*[3] till the end of the chapter[4] and should be read (as covering all of them) simultaneously. Now [after the verse beginning with] *teṣāmevānu-* (*kampārtham*) [the sage Vyāsa] cites six verses[5] containing the questions of Arjuna.[6] Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks verses ending with [the verse beginning with] *athavā bahu*. By [the verse beginning with] *ahamātmā*[7] [He] wards off separateness. Otherwise in statements such as '(among) the mountains I am the Himālayas', God is Himālaya alone and nothing else (could be assumed) — by such exclusion the unitary vision of *brahman* would have been annulled on account of the absence of indivisibility (of *brahman* which such statements seem to imply). Therefore this lesson is put together for one whose mind

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[2] See Bhagavadgītā X. 18.
[3] Bhagavadgītā X. 10.
[4] Bhagavadgītā X. 42.
[5] In the critical edition these are seven, Bhagavadgītā X. 12-18, inclusive of both. In the Kāśmīrā recension Ś6 omits X-15.
[6] Bhagavadgītā X. 42.
[7] Bhagavadgītā X. 20.

cannot grasp that (concept of) indivisible pervasiveness as such but who wants to know about it. Now, in conclusion, after having expressed the notion of difference-cum-non-difference through [the verse containing the expression] *yad-yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ*,[8] (the Lord) concludes with [a note of] non-difference [with the verse[9] which may be paraphrased thus:] *athavā kiṁ bahunai 'tena viṣṭabhyā 'ham ity ekāṁśena jagat sthitaḥ*.[10] As has been said [in the Puruṣasūkta:] 'A quarter of Him comprises all the creatures; three-fourths of Him is immortal in the sky'.[11] It is for the sake of created beings that all the divine essence of His, shining forth in various variegated forms, becomes the object of perception.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> [Even] the slayer of a brahmin may obtain peace by forcefully dissolving[12] [into the one true principle] whatever approaches his desire or his organs of sense[13].

Here ends the tenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.[14]

CHAPTER XI

XI. 1

Arjuna questions (Kṛṣṇa) in order to directly realize the sense of what has been spoken of in the immediately preceding chapter.[1] The course of action, the purpose of which was understood through (the previous) teaching, becomes (all the more) evident[2] when experienced directly in one's consciousness; for the sake (of achieving that) are these statements and responses uttered (which now follow). Arjuna said [the verse beginning with] *madanugrahāya*.

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[8] Bhagavadgītā X. 41.
[9] Bhagavadgītā X. 42.
[10] Why say more? I abide having planted (Myself) with a fraction (of Myself) in the universe.
[11] ṚgVeda X. 90. 3.
[12] Lit. causing it to wail.
[13] *Brahmahā* literally means the slayer of a *brāhmaṇa* or the slayer of *brahman*.
[14] The Nirṇayasāgara edition adds: "The glorious Teacher of Rājānaka."

[1] Read a period after *pṛcchati* and not a dash as in the Nirṇayasāgara edition.
[2] This refers to the imminent *Viśvarūpadarśana*.

XI. 6

The Lord spoke [the verses beginning with] *paśya me* etc.

XI. 9

Sañjaya spoke [the verses beginning with] *evam* etc.

XI. 15

Arjuna said [the verses beginning with] *paśyāmi* etc.

XI. 18

Now the verse beginning *tvam akṣaram*: [The word] *sātvatadharmagoptā* [is to be understood thus]. The *Sātvatas* are those who have offered the quality of goodness (*sattva*)—which has the nature of not making the differentiation between the two, *jñāna* and *karma*, appear—to the supreme *guru*, the great god Śiva; and for whom the truth, of the nature of light, shines forever. Their *dharma* is one in which the entire cosmos gets folded up (or destroyed) on account of devotion to the renunciation of incessant grasping, and which surpasses all (other) paths. (Lord Kṛṣṇa) acts as a protector of such a *dharma*. This indeed is the secret purport of this chapter, and one on which light has often been shed by me in (my) *Devīstotravivṛti*.[3] That (secret is such as) is automatically understood by those who are well-instructed and endowed with an understanding heart. What is the point then in being verbosely repetitive about what is obvious.

NOTE: The critical edition reads *śāśvatadharmagoptā* for *sātvatadharmagoptā*. The latter is the Kāśmīrī reading.

XI. 31, 33

Now the verse (containing the expressions) *ākhyāhi* and *na hi prajānāmi*: [Arjuna says:] I do not understand [the nature of] your activity; what is the purpose underlying the fierceness (of the form revealed to me)? Therein the Lord's[4] reply [is as follows:] That this world is said to be of a nature which possesses both knowledge and ignorance

[3] Seems to be another name for Abhinavagupta's *Devīstotravivaraṇa*, a commentary on the Devīstotra of Ānandavardhana to which Abhinavagupta has already referred in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā VI. 30. Kanti Chandra Pandey does not seem to notice this second reference by Abhinavagupta in the Gītārthasaṅgraha to *Devīstotravivriti* (sic) (vide Kanti Chandra Pandey, *Abhinavagupta—An Historical and Philosophical Study*, p. 34).

[4] Read '*bhagavatottaraṁ*' for '*bhavatottaraṁ*'.

on account of feeding on pure, impure and mixed perceptions has often been aphoristically stated; in this chapter the secret is merely touched upon[5] for the sake of those capable of knowing it. So be it. For how many more lines must we continue this painful business of writing on? Herein, when it was said: 'In respect to these, who have (already) been killed by me, you are the (mere) occasion (for their killing. Therefore kill them and) be victorious'[6]—therein the Lord gave his reply to what Arjuna has asked earlier in the verse beginning with *na cai 'tad vidmaḥ katarat* etc.[7]

XI. 32

The Lord said [the verses beginning with] *kālo 'smi* etc.

XI. 35

Sañjaya said [the verse beginning with] *etac chrutvā*.

XI. 36

Arjuna said [the verse beginning with] *sthāne hṛṣikeśa*. *Prakīrtyā* means through litanies of praise.

XI. 37

[The clause] *sad asat tatparaṁ* is now glossed. *Sat* or truth is so called on account of its substantiality; *asat* or untruth is so called because it cannot be an object of (genuine) perception. Or else [the expression may be understood thus:] Even when there is a void in the mind, it is embraced by the various individual specificities of speech[8] (in their unmanifest form) and (thus) obtains to various forms of cognition which are not really a part of the reality of the supreme *brahman*. [The supreme reality] is beyond the *sat*-form and the *asat*-form—that is, that form of the reality [which is beyond both *sat* and *asat*] is obtained when the awareness of both (the *sat* and the *asat*) has disappeared.

XI. 38, 39

Now the verses beginning with *tvām* and *vāyu* occur.

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[5] Lit. scratched.
[6] Abhinavagupta here paraphrases Bhagavadgītā XI. 33.
[7] Bhagavadgītā II. 6.
[8] The translation is conjectural. The text is hard to determine.

XI. 47

The Lord said [the verse beginning with] *mayā*. The frequent repetition of salutations (*namonamaḥ*) is expressive of the superabundance of devotion. Those forms of His which were spoken of by the Lord in the past chapters, those very forms Arjuna describes as having been directly perceived by him by means of hymns of praise. Any (further) commentary on that will only involve repetition, so we pause.

XI. 54

[The verse beginning with] *bhaktyā tv ananyayā* etc. follows.

XI. 55

Now the verse beginning *matkarmakṛt*: As [the love of God] confers, when everything is withdrawn (in universal)[9] dissolution, a place in the essence of *brahman*, in the form of supreme peace, therefore at the conclusion (of this chapter) the benignness (i.e. the benign form) of God (has been shown). On those in whom throbs a love of God pleasing on account of knowing nothing else (but God's love), the realization of the universal essence of Vāsudeva descends effortlessly, through the marvellous effect of the various teachings spoken of already such as "Vāsudeva is all"[10] etc.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Since it is one single consciousness which illumines (all the) three acquisitions—pure, impure and mixed, the equanimous sage (dwells) viewing the three worlds—the *bhūḥ* (earth), the *bhuvaḥ* (the atmosphere) and the *svaḥ* (heaven)—with equanimity.

Here ends the eleventh chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XII

XII. 1, 2, 3

[Arjuna's] question is meant to make known the distinction between those who, in the aforesaid manner worship the personal God and

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[9] See Bhagavadgītā XI. 50, 51.

[10] Bhagavadgītā VII. 19.

those who worship the *ātman* (i.e. the impersonal God) alone. The Lord said the verse beginning with *mayy āveśya* [in reply]. Those who abide in devotion to the great God (Śiva) and whose existence is naturally pervaded by (love for) Him — they in my opinion are *yogins par excellence*. This assertion is made [in the verse beginning with] *ye tv akṣaram* etc.

XII. 4, 5

Now the verse beginning *sanniyamya*: Those who worship the imperishable *brahman* impose on the *ātman* all the attributes of God by such characteristic descriptions as 'The *ātman* is all-pervasive etc.'. Thus, although those who worship *brahman* also go to me, they put themselves to more trouble. In spite of an effortlessly attainable God being present, the excellence of whose host of qualities is naturally perfect, they (first) impose on the *ātman* the octad of qualities such as sinlessness etc., and then worship it and undertake a double effort.

XII. 6, 7

Now the verses beginning *ye tu*: Those who, in accordance with earlier teaching, cast everything on me, I am their saviour from all afflictions such as obstacles etc. [In re the expression *āveśitacetasām*, the manner in which] the absorption of the mind [in me has to be accomplished] has already been explained. Moreover, this indeed is the best (form) of *yoga* on account of its naturalness. As I have (said) in my hymn:

> When (someone) causes some spiritual realization to come about, by the bringing about of it made possible by a *samādhi* induced by a special method, posture and disciplined state, it is not a state of same *samādhi* (*citi*) as yours which is everlasting, which bears its own essence (and which) therefore in the proximity of the triad[1] is clearly experienced right here. (Then) the fire of Realization comes to be known instantaneously and simultaneously, gained on its own; having exhausted its fuel (in the form of desires etc.) and resorting to its own independence, when it follows upon the tears, trembling and horripilation from (the overflow of)

[1] Obscure. According to the *pratyabhijñā* system "there are three triads, the higher, the lower and the combined (Para, Apara and Parāpara). The first consists of Śiva, Śakti and their union; the second of Śiva, Śakti and Nara; and the third of three goddesses Parā, Aparā and Parāparā. It is called Trika because it deals with all the three triads" (Kanti Chandra Pandey, *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, pp. 295-6).

natural joy; manifestly disregarding the body. Only then, O goddess, the great god Śiva comes to be known, free from the (deludingly?) beautiful essence of your body, who is the destroyer of the bonds of the helpless.

XII. 9

Now the verse beginning *atha*: [The word] *samādhātum* means to cause to become devoted or absorbed.

XII. 9, 10

Now[2] the verse beginning *athaitadapi*[3] and ending with *avāpsyasi*: Without the strongest possible divine grace and the grace of the feet of the *guru* who has been pleased for a long time, absorption (in God) is difficult to achieve—hence constant practice is recommended. If even constant practice is not possible on account of the obstacles which arise, then in order to destroy them perform action, that is, *pūjā*, *japa*, *svādhyāya*, *homa* etc.

XII. 11

[Now the verse beginning] *athaitad api*: If you are unable to perform these actions directed towards God because of ignorance of the procedures enjoined in the scriptures, then cast all that on me by means of self-surrender: this is the intended message. With this very intention in mind has it been said by me in the Laghuprakriyā:[4]

> Whatever (action) was (performed) without the proper knowledge of what is to be done more and what less, what comes before and what after; whatever were devoid of concentration, or involved lapse of intelligence on my part, this miserable and perverse devotee of yours, O lord of all—please forgive them out of your grace, O Śiva, for thou art compassionate. Through the use of this hymn I surrender myself to Thee. May I never again become a fit place for sorrows without (good) reason.

In the authoritative texts of Śaivism this is what is meant by self-surrender.

XII. 12

Now the purport (of these remarks) is brought to a conclusion [with

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[2] The expression '*abhyāsepīti*' in the Nirṇayasāgara text needs to be disregarded. It does not occur in the B.O.R.I. manuscript.

[3] Somewhat unaccountably both the Nirṇayasāgara and the B.O.R.I. texts have the form *athaitadapi* here, which is how XII. 11 commences and not XII. 9 which starts with *atha cittaṁ* (vulgate) or *athāveśayituṁ* (Kāśmīrī version).

[4] Abhinavagupta also quotes from this text in his gloss on Bhagavadgītā IV. 28.

the verse beginning with] *śreyo hi* etc. *Jñāna* is better, that is to say, (being a) soul absorbed in God is better than constant application—because that is what constant application results in. From that (mere devotional) absorption (in God), meditation on God is superior, it has its own special quality. More appropriate than meditation, which involves attachment to the attainment of the desirable, is the casting away of all fruits of action on devotion to God. Otherwise, if the form (of God) is not known, how (will the actions be) cast away? Upon abandoning the fruits of action (follows) absolute peace. Therefore knowledge characterized by absorption (in God) is primary because it lies at the very root.

XII. 13, 14, 19

Now the verse beginning *adveṣṭā*: Friendship is that from which comes freedom from jealousy; so also compassion. [*Nirmamaḥ* means one who is free from the sense of] 'mineness' which means (saying) 'Thine' 'We' etc., that is, 'I am generous', 'I am brilliant'. [*Nirhaṅkāraḥ* means one who is free from *ahaṅkāra* or] egoism (characterized by) being impatient (or intolerant) etc. He who is free from these two (is one who is called *nirmamo-nirhaṅkāraḥ*). Forgiveness is the absence of enmity towards a wicked enemy. [A person having these attributes] is ever a *yogin* by virtue of possessing a pacified mind even in the midst of all worldly dealings. [The expression] *aniketaḥ* means one who has no such resolve "I must do this"; partaking of the joys and sorrows, etc., as they are obtained at random, one who has his heart set on God easily attains supreme beatitude.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> One who has the good fortune of being absorbed (in God) by being overwhelmed by (a sense of) supreme felicity, experiences, of its own accord, in all states, the reality of *brahman* spontaneously.

Here ends the twelfth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XIII

Introductory Note

The first verse commented on by Abhinavagupta does not exist in

the vulgate or the critical edition of the Bhagavadgītā. It is, however, found in some versions of the Kāśmīra recension of the Bhagavadgītā.[1]

That verse itself, however, comes in two readings. In one it is spoken by Kṛṣṇa,[2] in the other by Arjuna.[3] On the basis of the internal evidence provided by Abhinavagupta in the gloss it is possible to identify the reading he had before him. It seems to have run as follows:

Śrī Bhagavān uvāca

prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva
kṣetraṁ kṣetrajñam eva ca /
etat te kathayiṣyāmi
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ ca bhārata //

Abhinavagupta glosses this verse as follows:

Somewhere in the Vedas the *kṣetrajña* is heard of as worthy of being worshipped. Is he the *ātman* or God or else some other third entity—suspecting such a question the Lord instructs [through the verse beginning with] *prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ*.

XIII. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

For those involved in the process of *saṁsāra*, the body is the field (*kṣetra*), wherein the seed of *karma* sprouts. Therefore their *ātman*, vexed by external defilement, is called 'the knower of the field' (*kse-trajña*).[4] For the enlightened that itself is the field. But there is a difference in [etymological] interpretation [to be met with in the case of the word *kṣetrajña* as follows:] The *kṣa* in *kṣetra* may be connected with *kṣiṇoti* (√*kṣi*) thus:] that which cuts asunder the bond of *karma* by its dissipation through enjoyment [and the *tra* in *kṣetra* may be connected with *trāyate* (√*trai*) thus:] that which delivers one from the fear of birth and death; for such *ātman*s the supreme soul Vāsudeva is the *kṣetrajña*, that is to say, one who makes such a *kṣetra* known. [But how can one get the sense of "making it known" (*vedayati*) when the word *kṣetrajña* translates as "knower of the field"?] In the root *vid* the causative sense of the suffix (*ṇic*) should be understood

[1] See Vishnu S. Sukthankar and S.K. Belvalkar, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 166.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[4] Read *rūṣitaḥ* for *rūāṣateḥ*(?).

as subsumed.[5] Therefore He, by whose grace, that which is lacking in consciousness acquires the state of consciousness, he indeed is *kṣetrajña* and none else. But as particular and resorting to a form, possessing limited pervasiveness, it is called the *ātman* (i.e. the *jīvātman*). Lord Vāsudeva is the supreme soul on account of pervading all the fields (*kṣetras*) without any distinction. The (genitive) form *mama* is to be understood as an accusative [i.e. the expression *mataṁ mama* does not mean "knowledge about me or opinion about me"[6] but rather that] I am to be known by this knowledge—this is what is meant. That by which anything becomes modified is called a modifier [or *vikārin*] and the word is used in verse XIII. 3 in this sense. The word *samāsena*, in the same verse, similarly means that [the Lord] cuts through questions [asked by Arjuna] with one common answer, without distinguishing among them individually. Although this has been spoken of many a time by the sages and through the Vedas as well, even so I speak of it briefly. The unmanifest is *prakṛti*. The senses, along with the mind, are eleven (in number). The fields of the senses such as form, etc., are five. Consciousness means the ability to perceive. The *puruṣa* is referred to as *dhṛti* (or fortitude). Herein [i.e. in the listing of all the elements of *kṣetra*] in the end [appears *dhṛti* or *puruṣa*, which is me for] the collectivity of all actions—whether being initiated or concluded, such as passion, anger, etc., of all, right from that of *brahmā* to that of an insect can be accounted for by me satisfactorily—(so) what else (remains?). Such am I always and such shall I (always) be. [What is referred to as] *dhṛti*, the bearer of life, characterized by respiration, is referred to in the esoteric texts of others by the word *rāga*.

XIII. 7

In this manner *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* have been explained. Now *jñāna* is described [in the verses beginning with] *amānitvam*.

XIII. 10, 11

Now the verse containing the expression *ananyayoga*: The uniform conviction that there exists nothing apart whatsoever from the supreme lord (Śiva), the supreme soul, that indeed is *yoga*—through that conviction is devotion to me (secured). [Because it is of this kind]

[5] The point to be borne in mind is that in true causatives the *ṇic* may occasionally be dropped.

[6] See Pāṇini 2. 3, 67.

such a devotion is unfailing (it never deviates or becomes corrupt) either because of the absence of all those desires which provide the occasion for corruption or on account of those (desires), which constitute the inner form of mental activities, having become one with the (purified) mind. Thus should it be construed everywhere (i.e. with respect to other expressions in the verse). What is opposed to this is ignorance, such as arrogance etc.

XIII. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

That which is the object of this knowledge is spoken of [in the verses beginning with] *jñeyaṁ yat tat*, etc.[7] Everywhere undivided, within and without all the senses, the (light of) lights — it is described by such characteristic descriptions — as beginningless etc. (to indicate) its conduciveness for embracing the nature of *brahman* and its non-difference from consciousness which has been stated in all the various schools. These characteristic expressions have been explained already, so why indulge in futile repetition. He who knows this triad of *kṣetra*, *jñāna* and *jñeya* — he is my devotee and he attains to my state.

XIII. 19, 20, 21

These characteristics having been detailed, they are now examined [in the verses beginning with] *prakṛti*, etc. That *prakṛti*, which is responsible for the creation of the body and the senses, is also eternal because of the absence of any other cause (which would account for it). The modifications are (objects such as) cloth etc. *Prakṛti* is the reason behind the existence of causal relationships. *Puruṣa* is the enjoyer on account of his primacy [which is stated in the verse beginning with] *puruṣa* etc.

XIII. 22

Now the verse beginning with *upadraṣṭā*: There is indeed the mutual dependence of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* like that of the lame and the blind. Therefore this is referred to by the authors of the scriptures under various names, such as "one is form, the other the onlooker" etc. [i.e. *prakṛti* is form, *puruṣa* is the onlooker etc.]. In this respect this is the meaning aimed at: there is *prakṛti*, its fourteenfold modifications constitute creation. And there is *puruṣa*: all of these are

[7] There is a lacuna in the Nirṇayasāgara text: after *jñeyaṁ yattadityādinā* add *sarvataḥ sarvendriyabahiranta-avibhaktaṁ jyotiṣām iti kṣetram* (*anādimat* etc.), as per the B.O.R.I. manuscript.

unborn and eternal, upon being blended in the essence of *brahman*, for there is nothing apart from that.

XIII. 23, 24, 25

And it is also said [the verse beginning with] *ya evaṁ vetti*. Thus the *yogin* who, in this manner, knows *puruṣa*, *prakṛti*, the qualities and their modifications—all through the uniform vision of *brahman*, he is indeed liberated whatever and howsoever his situation—this is what is meant. This type of preeminent knowledge is worshipped by some as being identical with the *ātman*; by others in the Sāṅkhyan manner mentioned earlier; by others through *karma*, and by yet others who are keen listeners and who, not knowing this truth by themselves worship it as revealed—they too go beyond death, beyond *saṁsāra*. The essence of God worshipped in whatsoever way, carries one across (the ocean of *saṁsāra*), therefore in every way ever abide in it—this is what is said.

XIII, 26, 28

Now the verse beginning *yāvat*: Whatever moves and does not move—it is not possible for any of that to be beyond *kṣetrajña* (God)—therefore (thinking thus) the *yogin* is always equanimous and does no violence to himself, that is to say, does not cause himself to fall in the ocean of *saṁsāra*, hard to cross.

XIII. 29

Now the verse beginning *prakṛtyai'va hi*.[8] He whose understanding is firmly of this kind that *prakṛti* alone acts and not I in any wise, he, although performing all actions (actually) does nothing. In this way he is not an agent of action.

XIII. 30, 31, 32

Or else, when, on account of the magnitude and all-pervasiveness (of the *ātman*) one sees the distinctness and diversity of all creatures as present within the *ātman*; and regards them as impelled by the *ātman* alone, then too, on account of being the doer of everything, he does not become subject to the smear (of *karma*). For the supreme soul, although situate in the body, is not smeared, like the sky.

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[8] The reading in the critical text is *ca* for *hi*.

XIII. 33

Now the verse beginning *yathā prakāśayati*: How can one single supreme soul (*paramātman*) embrace several fields (*kṣetras*)?: this boubt is removed by the celebrated illustration of the sun. By "all fields" is meant all fields (*kṣetra*) movable and immovable.

XIII. 34

Now the verse beginning *kṣetrakṣetrajñayoḥ*: In this manner what has been spoken of in this chapter—what is the object of knowledge (*jñeya*), knowledge (*jñāna*), the difference between the field (*kṣetra*) and the knower of the field (*kṣetrajña*), the difference between creatures (*bhūta*) and nature (*prakṛti*) and the achievement of release through a slight modification in the characteristic relationship between the creatures (*bhūta*) and nature (*prakṛti*)—those who see those things with a divine eye, unassailable everywhere (and) characterized by knowledge, they, having obtained the (quintessential) quality of Vāsudeva—indeed attain it.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> The distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is only drawn by the confused.
> The perfect ones regard the world as pervaded by one pure *ātman*.

Here ends the thirteenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XIV

XIV. 1

The Lord said [the verse beginning with] *paraṁ bhūyaḥ*: I shall speak of that very knowledge which has been spoken of earlier, once again, thoroughly and at great length in order to depict the quality of each *guṇa*. "Knowing which" (*yajjñātvā*)—by this the manifestly convincing nature and logical demonstrability of this knowledge is stated.

XIV. 2

Now the verse beginning *idaṁ jñānam* is glossed. [The *ti* suffix in the verbal form] *vyathanti* is so an account of metrical exigency [as

it really should be *vyathante* and not *vyathanti*, but that would violate the metre]. Elsewhere too (modifications in) the case of nominal and verbal suffixes should be similarly understood.

NOTE: The mention of *tiṅ* suffix by Abhinavagupta is a bit vague as any verbal suffix—active or middle—can be referred to by *tiṅ*. So what he really seems to imply but leaves unsaid is that the *switch in the tiṅ* suffix from middle to active is due to metrical reasons.

XIV. 3, 4

Therein, at the very outset, the order of creation is described [in the verses beginning with] *mama yoni-* and *sarvayoniṣu*. Giving up is easy when it is known what is to be given up and why. To me—who am indescribable as possessing the nature of supreme bliss belongs *mahat brahman*, that (aspect of) *brahman* which has the power to make its own nature expand. I, resorting to my own power called *vimarśa* [i.e. "that power which gives rise to self-consciousness, will, knowledge, and action in succession"[1]] make the eternal atomic souls subject to the process of *saṁsāra* for the sake of obliging them.[2] Therefore the expansive power of God is called the Mother because it is the original cause of all beings and possesses a nature which brings forth the entire world. I, on the other hand, am the Father, the possessor of power (*śakti*), who am indefinable.[3]

XIV. 5

Now the verse beginning *sattvaṁ*: And this embodied soul, by its very nature, is bound by the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* for the sake of enjoyments which last till the attainment of salvation.

XIV, 6, 7

Now the verse beginning *tatra sattvaṁ*: *Rajas* is of the nature of attachment; *tamas* is born of ignorance etc., in this manner their form (i.e. the form of the *guṇas*) is described. *Sattva* is pure. [And *rajas* is described as *tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam* in verse XIV. 6 because] from it arise longing and attachment.

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[1] A technical term in Kāśmīra Śaivism, see Kanti Chandra Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

[2] In Śaivism, God, in addition to the functions of creation, preservation and destruction also performs two more: of concealment and bestowal of grace. He puts the souls through *saṁsāra* so that they may be rid of ignorance and realize their nature. Hence even subjecting them to *saṁsāra* is an act of favour. See T. M. P. Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

[3] For this sense of *avyapadeśyaḥ* see Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad I. 7.

XIV. 8

Now the verse containing the *tamas tu* and *pramādālasya*: Heedlessness (*pramāda*) consists of wasting away human life which is hard to obtain, which is obtained as the result of hundreds of spiritual merits accumulated over a long time and which is the sole cause for achieving salvation. As has been said with reference to the same: "Not a single moment of life (once lost, can be re-)gained by all the wealth in the world (lit. by all the jewels). He who wastes it away is heedless, wretched among men". Or as (has been said) in the Śrīmad-bhāgavata: "The night is taken away by sleep, and moreover, life by obstacles. The day, O king, in trying to obtain wealth and in supporting the family. Even though these hosts consisting of the physical body, children, wife etc. are unreal, one who is intoxicated by them, does not see (his) death (close at hand) even though seeing it (i.e. one remains blind to the prospect of his death)". Moreover: "Of what avail here are the numerous years (that stretch out) in the future for a heedless person. Much better the moment on hand which is capable of producing good". [Not heeding that moment—] that is heedlessness. Indeed therein (in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa) in the eleventh canto the Lord has declared what is meant by the word suicide thus: "Having first easily obtained this human body hard to obtain, a ship well-designed with the *guru* at the helm and urged on by me with a favourable wind—that man who does not cross over the ocean of *saṁsāra* (given these favourable circumstances) is one who commits suicide". Laziness (*ālasya*) means slackness in performing good deeds. A completely woebegone state is [what is meant by] *nidrā* [by taking the prefix *ni* to stand for *niḥśeṣeṇa* or completely and *drā* to stand for *drāṇam* or a wretched state].

XIV. 9

Now the verse beginning *sattvaṁ*. [The verbal form] *sañjayati* means to cause to unite with.

XIV. 10

Now the verse beginning *rajas tamaś ca*: *Sattva* grows by predominating over *rajas* and *tamas*. And *rajas* (by predominating over) *sattva* and *tamas*. *Tamas* (by predominating) over *sattva* and *rajas*. As has been said: "By the predominance of one over the other (comes about) the growth of the *guṇas*".

XIV. 11, 12, 13

Now the verse beginning *sarva*: *Rajas* becoming prominent, greed, etc., arise in all the doors, that is, in all the senses, duly in regular succession. Similarly, darkness, etc., arise duly in regular succession from increase of *tamas*.

XIV. 14, 15

Now the verse begining *yadā*: When *sattva* becomes predominant as a result of carrying on *sāttvika* practices ceaselessly throughout one's entire life, then follows the attainment by the deceased of the benign worlds. In the same way, on the departure of one who has constantly engaged in *rājasika* activities since his birth (follows) the attainment of the human condition for the sake of special enjoyments.[4] Similarly, in that very manner, if *tāmasika* activities have been engaged in throughout one's entire life, then one is born in infernal, animal or vegetable bodies etc. Those who say that these results follow upon the predominance of *sāttvika* or other qualities only at the moment of death, (then) by saying that they have become (pre-)occupied with physical experience [i.e. they take a grossly physical view of the situation]. For in the case of everyone always at the last moment infatuation alone appears. In this commentary of ours there are other verses consistent with these ideas.[5]

XIV. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

Now the verses beginning *karmaṇaḥ*: Here some unconnected verses have been conjured up some say, to be shunned as being repetitious.[6] On the other hand, hearing about one who has gone beyond the *guṇas* is indeed conducive to salvation.

XIV. 21

Now how does the embodied soul go beyond the *guṇas*? With whatever mental disposition it always abides, this must be different from that which is characterized by the three *guṇas*. With this in mind Arjuna asks [the question contained in the verse beginning with] *kair liṅgaiḥ*:

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[4] Read *viśiṣṭopabhogāya* for *vi(siṣto)-miśropabhogāya*.
[5] Abhinavagupta seems to refer to his glosses on VIII. 5, 6 etc.
[6] The expression *kecit* is significant here.

XIV. 22, 23

Herein by way of answer the Lord said [the verse beginning with] *prakāśaṁ ca*. Although qualities such as *sattva* etc., are present in all things (or situations), even so the *yogins* do not get attached to those qualities such as *sattva* etc. nor feel aversion towards them. But rather these (*guṇas*) are present only on account of the very nature of the body, they are not capable of upsetting me—reflecting thus they go beyond the *guṇas*. Therefore is it said: the ignorant man who abides without discrimination, he is one who (really) knows for he possesses genuine knowledge. And also, he does not become agitated, that is, fall away from his true nature. This is the (*yogic*) technique of dealing with all actions—the firm understanding that all this that happens is out of the very nature of the senses etc., that are located in the body, and I do not seek the attainment of any fruit (therefrom).

XIV. 26, 27

This fundamental technique is preached with [the verse beginning with] *māṁ ca*. [The particle] *ca* has been used in the sense of the exclusion of everything else. [That is to say, the expression *mām ca sevate* means] he who serves me alone. In this way, he who, desirous of fruits etc., resorts only secondarily to me and primarily to the fruit is excluded (from consideration). For this devotion of his is not exclusively for me, as he is devoted to the fruit. He who, not desiring any fruit, with his heart permeated by the penetrating quality of God's constant devotion, with his hair standing on end, his body trembling, a flood of tears flowing from his two eyes, quite dilated, answers only with silence though repeatedly badgered [with such questions] as 'why are you dissimulating?'—he alone is purified by the intense unswerving devotion of the great lord (Śiva)—none else. On me being served, *brahman* is realized. Otherwise, if *brahman* is worshipped as inanimate then it will confer salvation which is devoid of any express quality—like sleep.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> One who is free from egoism and delusion under the influence of the nectar of scintillating devotion, such a person, even though present amidst the traffic of the *guṇas*, is as good as having gone beyond them thereby.

Here ends the fourteenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XV

XV. 1

The Lord spoke [the verses] beginning with *ūrdhvamūlam* and ending with *padam avyayam*: It is said in other scriptures that *aśvattha* is everything; it alone is to be worshipped etc.—through this (verse) the significance of that for the worship of God and *brahman* is described. The root is of the nature of tranquility. It is on high, then one indeed attains abstention from worldly acts in every way. The Vedas are its foliage. Just as the size, fruitfulness, sapfulness, moisture, etc., is indicated by the leaves in the case of a tree, so is the conviction of the truth of *brahman* said to come through the scriptural portals marked by the Vedas.

XV. 2

[The expression *guṇa-pravṛddhaḥ* has to be understood as follows] (with branches) flourishing through the *guṇas* such as *sattva* etc. on account of being full (of creatures) beginning with the gods and ending with immovable ones.[1] The lower roots of such (a tree) consist of good and evil *karmas*.

XV. 3

"Having cut it" (*taṁ chitvā*)—in this expression the act (of cutting), which applies literally to the thing qualified (*viśeṣya* = *aśvattham*) must be taken, because of the context, as attracted to the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇam*), as in the (Mīmāṁsic) injunction: "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands."

NOTE: In the injunction "The staff-bearer should repeat the commands,"[2] it is really the bearing of the staff which is primary; similarly, what is meant is that the well-entrenched roots of the tree are to be chopped down rather than the tree as such.

XV. 4, 5

Beyond that is the eternal tranquil station—that is (what they attain to).

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[1] Place a period after *devādisthāvarāntatayā*.

[2] See P. V. Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. II Pt. II, p. 960.

XV. 6

Now the verse beginning with *na tad*: Therein the sun etc., find no place because they are bounded by time, because they can be objects of knowledge; because of their being of use to the senses. But that, (the ultimate reality), is beyond them on account of its being unbounded by time and space, because it is the (ultimate) cause of knowledge and because it is that which sets the senses in motion.

XV. 7

Now the verse beginning *mamai 'vā 'ṁśo*: That this is a part of *brahman*—this fragmentation of one (*brahman*) which is perfect in itself which continues to continuously possess consciousness and awareness, is on account of a mistaken understanding (of its true nature); it is not that it really becomes fragmented.[3] As the Vedas declare: "Not a spot lies beyond the universal scope of *brahman*". Such (heuristic) devices may be resorted to on occasion—thus there is no contradiction involved.

XV. 8

Reaches (*avāpnoti*) that is, grasps. Goes beyond (*utkrāmati*), that is, leaves. With these—just as the all-pervasive wind reaching a king in repose then having taken along the scent, goes elsewhere along with it—so the soul (enters into) the city, with the eight elements (i.e. the body).[4] In this way the coming together of these at the time of creation and dissolution, having been spoken of; it is determined that even in the (intermediate) state of preservation—which has the forms of standing, sitting, mineness etc., and which is such in nature as grasps the sense objects—the activity is carried on along with it.

XV. 9, 10, 11

Now the verse beginning *śrotraṁ*: "The mind"—by this the heart is indicated. Therefore remaining present on account of being united with the physical condition, and leaving in order to take hold of another body, or for enjoying the sense-objects, the ignorant do not see it because they are unenlightened. But the enlightened ones, seeking out its nature of consciousness everywhere in unbroken *samādhi* know it as it is because they are diligent. In the case of the ignorant, how-

[3] Insert *na* in the text after *upacaritam*.
[4] See Bhagavadgītā VII. 4.

ever, even effort does not bear fruit because of the immaturity of their emotion. In autumn, even with the intensive application of resources such as water etc., the sown seeds are not able to come to fruition. Hence resources alone will not do the trick (i.e. work for it). The case of the water which is released by the wheel of the pond where water has collected in spring is, however, something else. Hardly is there a piece of earth, rendered desolate by winter, which shines up with the mere touch of the sun's rays—just so the effort of those who are not self-controlled, their effort not being full-fledged and whole-hearted, does not succeed. Therefore those who have obtained the (spiritual) means represented by Śaivite initiation etc., cannot be deemed to be practising the method in its entirety if their inner eye is full of complexes such as anger, attachment etc. As has been said: "On anger etc., being present, even the initiated do not obtain *mokṣa*".

XV. 12

Now the verse beginning *yadāditya*: Our *guru* explains the three forms of brilliance, namely, sun etc.,[5] in (terms of) the manifestation of creation, preservation and dissolution (of the universe) as indicated in the tenth chapter. That the universe is supported by the fusion and diffusion (fission) of the five elements is the great glory of God alone—this is (proclaimed) by this (verse). For thus (is to be explained) the shining and sustaining quality of sun and fire, because of the identity of these two streams of *tejas*. Thus has it been said—that (brilliance) which resides in the sun etc.

XV. 13, 14

[Now the verse beginning with *gām āviśya* is glossed.] [I] having entered the earth [support it] with two halves [i.e. half-elements]. The lunar light illuminates and nourishes; the earth is (made) from the union of water and light. [It has been said earlier—that I am that brilliance] which is in the moon—by that part (of my brilliance which is in the moon) I nourish (the earth)—this is said through half a verse. The brilliance pertaining to fire—characterized by illumination, nourishment, combustion, perspiration and digestion—that is from the union of earth, water, fire, and air: that is spoken of

[5] These three forms are (1) the sun; (2) the moon and (3) fire, see Bhagavadgītā XV. 12.

here through [the expression: I am that brilliance] which is in fire; and also through the verse beginning *ahaṁ vaiśvānaraḥ* (I am the universal fire.) Ether — being present in the form which provides room for perception, is all-pervasive.

XV. 15

Therefore, having spoken of the forms [in which God is] perceptible, [the Lord] speaks the verse beginning with *sarvasya* to indicate the *ātman*, transcendent by nature, having the form of the supreme lord, free from all modalities of discursive knowledge, the doer of all, which forms the back-drop of those various perceptible forms and possesses an independent consciousness. In possession of that nature of awareness which is independent of all that is grasped (by the senses) in all that is known, I, as *vimarśa*, and therefrom as the unique manifesting knowledge in the form of the great creation of the universe, am also indeed in the pot. [*Apohana* (concealment)] has for its essence the denial of the (presence of) the universal soul (in everyone) and has the nature of ignorance and uncertain knowledge; [*smṛti*] is the memory of the subject, pervaded by the form of *māyā*, which creates the individual souls. These, being withdrawn and reduced to only their forms of mental images or impressions, are again caused to re-appear — hence is the independent creative ability of God spoken of, as also possessing the nature of omniscience because it is into it that all items of knowledge are withdrawn (at the time of dissolution). By *sarvaiḥ* is meant that the nature of the supreme lord has to be so understood in all the scriptures. On account of the authorship of the Vedas, and by way of[6] creating the entire universe and establishing it in its form again by uprooting it in accordance with the fruits of actions God alone is free and the doer of everything. Others have explained *apohana* thus: through (works) composed by other (un-accomplished) ones the sense of duality (of the ultimate reality) comes about, so out of the truthfulness of the Self He composes Vedānta.

XV. 16, 17, 18, 19

Now the verses beginning with *dvāv imau* and ending with *bhārata*:[7] This is what is said through the verse (beginning) *dvau imau puruṣau.* In this world everyone, even though not of an enlightened disposition,

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[6] Read *karmaphalatatsambandhādidvāratayā* for *karmaphalatatsambandhādhidvāratayā.*
[7] I.e. Bhagavadgītā XV. 16-20.

knows his conscious body, composed of various elements such as earth, etc., as perishable; so duality does not disappear on account of the ignorance of the people. I, conferring my grace on everyone, am to be known, after cutting the knot of duality, as pervading the whole world. I am beyond the perishable because the creatures are inert. I am beyond the imperishable on account of the denial of the all-pervasiveness of the *ātman* upon its non-realization. In the world and in the Vedas, by statements such as these "He is the supreme *puruṣa*", that very pair of *paramātmans* (or supreme souls) is referred to. Knowing thus, worshipping me, the all-pervasive one, as the essence of *brahman*, knowing everything as pervaded by me (whosoever) in various ways e.g. images, with proper knowledge, worships me alone, whatever he sees, (he perceives) through the form of God etc. As has been said by me myself in the Śivaśaktivinābhāvastotra: "What is not a hymn of praise for thee, for all words indeed constitute your body! In all forms, born in the mind and external to it I was associated (with you)". "O benign one, O suppressor of the inauspicious—regarding everything in this universe as emerging spontaneously, there is not a single moment when I am not engaged in your praise, the holy repetition of your name, worship or meditation".

XV.20

Now the verse beginning *iti*: It is most recondite (*guhyatamaṁ*) because it propounds the non-duality of everything. True knowledge consists in knowing things as they are and not (in espousing) a worldly point of view. And through knowing things as they are comes true fulfillment, not with such actions as defeating enemies, obtaining wealth, enjoying women etc. The particle *ca* here is expressive of wonder. Through that (knowledge) is true fulfilment to be had. By this mere knowledge (and no action): this is the great wonder. By the word *iti*, the conclusion of the treatise is indicated. From something being concluded one knows that what was to be said has been fully said. For instance, in the XVIth chapter only Arjuna's eligibility (as a receiver of spiritual instruction) is established, nothing is preached. *Daivi* or divine attributes are those which are such (divine) and *āsurī* or demoniac attributes are such as are pervaded by ignorance. You have obtained to the divine attribute, pervaded by knowledge, this much alone is the purport. That he will say [in the verse beginning with] *ma śucaḥ saṁpadaṁ daivīm.*[8]

[8] Bhagavadgītā XVI. 5.

Therefore earlier, through the device of the account of the battle of the gods and the demons at the time of the depiction of the clash of knowledge and ignorance it was indicated that there is a conflict between knowledge and ignorance. Similarly in explaining things primarily for a disciple, as the occasion required, something else was also said—hence two (additional) chapters—will also come about. The instruction is concluded right here. In every state one should seek intense devotion to God—for achieving that all else has been said earlier. Supreme felicity lies in total devotion to the true nature of God.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Abandoning the great delusion of duality, and performing a meditation pervaded by *brahman*, the sage, even in worldly dealings may always remain merged (in God).

Here ends the fifteenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XVI

XVI. 1

Etad buddhvā (realizing this)—it was said thus.[1] [Now what is meant by realization?] Realization means (a kind of) knowledge, other than revealed knowledge, other than knowledge pervaded by ideation, reflection and logic involving 'this', 'thus', 'in this manner', (though) following upon the knowledge pervaded by ideation, reflection and the logic of 'this', 'thus', 'in this manner' through deliberation examination and consultation; ('realization' is the kind of knowledge which) consists of a cognition which is devoid of the downgrading of dissimilar experiences and is gained after the acquisition of the intellectual concept (*ākāra*) and its experiential content (*vijñāna*), well-practised. Thus the lord will say, "Do as you please having reflected over it thoroughly".[2]

Therein, in the matter of revealed knowledge there exists the primacy of the *guru* and the scripture indeed. In the knowledge consisting of

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[1] In Bhagavadgītā XV. 20.
[2] In Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 63.

logic, reflection and emotion it is the ability to deliberate (by oneself) and the extraordinary good qualities of the disciple which are primary. Therefore, with the intention (of saying) that this (quality) is possessed by Arjuna; and in order to provide the proper context for the statement being made, namely "having thought it over", the Lord, the Master, with the intention of making Arjuna gird up his loins, says [the verse beginning with] *abhayaṁ*.

Ignorance is indeed of the nature of *tamas*, comprised of demoniac parts, it is held in check by knowledge which has grown strong and which holds on to the divine element: such is the nature of the thing. You have attained to the *sāttvic* divine element which possesses the nature of knowledge; therefore getting rid of the ignorance inside you characterized by confusion, perform the act enjoined by the scripture which is characterized by the killing of one's enemies and pertains to the knowledge of the external (world). Thus commences the chapter.

XVI. 2

Moreover, these characteristic marks of (being imbued with) the divine element are quite obvious. [These consist of:] victory over the senses; (and) steadfastness — the absence of fickleness which consists of acting without weighing the pros and cons.

XVI. 3

Valour [is another such quality which] consists of getting rid of (timid) moderation[3] through gaining confidence in oneself.

XVI. 5

These are the divine attributes.[4] They are conducive to your salvation because they remove desires. Therefore do not grieve thus, "how will I attain happiness if I kill my brothers, etc.". The rest is clear.

XVI. 6

Now the verse beginning *dvau*: These divine attributes have been spoken of, such as fearlessness, etc.

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[3] Note that the word *mitatva* generally has a positive meaning in the sense of moderation, but seems to have been used here in a negative sense.

[4] The actual text uses the singular number; translated in the plural to avoid awkwardness.

XVI. 7, 8

[Now] the demoniac is described [in the verse beginning with] *pravrttiṁ ca* etc. *Pravṛtti* (raises the question) whence has (all) this arisen? *Nivṛtti* (raises the question): where does it disappear? *Akiñcit-kaṁ* (consists) in (holding the view) that nothing exists apart from the immediately perceivable.

XVI. 11, 12

Their worries last till the dissolution of the universe; they are unceasing on account of the non-cessation (of the process of) creation and dissolution. [Now the clause beginning with] *etāvat*: [For them] the enjoyment of pleasures is the supreme end and by its non-attainment (lit. loss) supreme anger (results in them). Therefore is it said that they are obsessed with passion and anger.[5]

XVI. 16

[They are] "bewildered by many a fancy" on account of indecision. [They fall] in the foul hell, that is, the hells called *avīci*,[6] etc. and [continue to be a victim of] the continuous process of birth and death (i.e. *saṁsāra*).

XVI. 17

They indeed perform sacrifices. What is meant is that the sacrifices are fruitless. By anger everything is destroyed—this is the meaning. Or else [the expression *nāmayajñaiḥ* means that] they perform sacrifices in name only. Or else, they are performed for the sake of name, for the sake of fame—whereby the reputation spreads that "He is a performer of sacrifices"—they are fraudulent indeed, they bear no fruit.

XVI. 18

On account of anger, etc., bearing enmity towards the people they bear enmity towards me indeed.

XVI. 19, 20, 21

I, Vāsudeva, have my abode in all; bearing enmity towards themselves (or the *ātman*) they act in such a way as to bring evil on them-

[5] Overlook the comma in the gloss in the Nirṇayasāgara text.

[6] It is interesting to note that *avīci* is "the deepest and the most unpleasant of Buddhist purgatories" (A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 278).

selves, which is the cause for their falling into hell; them I throw into demoniac wombs. Because the triad of passion etc. (i.e. *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha*) is the door to hell, therefore give them up.

XVI. 23, 24

Do not (think) that "These are merely human words so they may be disregarded", because in this respect the eternal scripture is the authority [—this is said in the verse beginning with] *yaḥ śāstravidhim*. *Au contraire*, one who gives up the way enjoined by the scriptures and uses his own intelligence to decide what to do and what not to do falls into hell. Therefore, not disregarding the scriptures, do not use your own discretion as to whether to act or not—this is what is intended.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> In the absence of proper understanding do not use your own intelligence to decide what to do, but rather (decide) in accordance with what is laid down in the scriptures—the scriptures promote understanding.

Here ends the sixteenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha of the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XVII

XVII. 1

Arjuna said [the verse beginning with] *ye śāstravidhim*. Those who conduct themselves without relying on scriptural injunctions, what becomes of them, this is the question.

XVII. 2

Herein the answer is given by the Lord in accordance with faith [through the verse] *trividhā* etc. Therein the intended meaning is as follows. *Śāstra* (i.e. the true understanding of the scripture) is indeed such—it is devoid of any prejudice on account of a point of view contaminated by partisanship, firm on account of mature reflection, having such a nature as produces the fruit etc., that comes through firm reflection from the free realization (of truth); which possesses the nature of supreme *brahman* in its aspect of *parā vāk* which is *virmarśa* in its pure and undisturbed state; which on account of its

free expansiveness flows from within, being the nature of pure realization outside, and whose subtlemost form as *pradhāna*[1] etc., becomes manifest in external concourse. As has been said: *dharma* has the Vedas as one of its sources and the memorial law and conduct of those who know it as another.[2] It (i.e. scripture) of its own accord, discriminates between right and wrong for the sake of instructing in what conduces to one's good and what does not. Those who by nature possess an extremely sensitive heart on account of the superabundance of the quality of *sattva*, their conduct is as good as possessing scriptural force. Another (with his mind) made turbid by *rajas* and *tamas* does not act according to the *śāstras* even when so doing because he cannot follow them fully. Only among those possessed of *sattva* does *śāstra* bear fruit. As the scripture itself says: "He whose hands and feet and mind are well-controlled and who possesses knowledge, austerities and proper conduct, he achieves the fruit of going on a pilgrimage". None else on account of not being well-controlled. Therefore it is the intended meaning of this chapter that the (true) meaning of the scripture bears fruit among those who have forsaken passion (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*) and infatuation (*moha*). This is thus elaborated, but not expounded further because the meaning is clear; we write only to remove textual inconsistencies.

XVII. 3, 4

The Lord [said the verse beginning with] *sattvānurūpā*: The word *sattva* here is a synonym of "one's own nature" (*svabhāva*). This *puruṣa*, the *ātman*, is invariably connected with faith (*śraddhā*) which is beyond all activities; he (the *puruṣa*) should be realized as pervaded by it.

XVII. 5

Now the line *aśāstravihitaṁ ghoraṁ tapyante ye tapo janāḥ*: Therefore, because they perform austerities thought out by themselves (and not as enjoined by the scriptures) they, on the other hand, are characterized by *tamas*.

XVII. 6

Now the clause *bhutagrāmam acetanam*:[3] [They are described as]

[1] Read *pradhāna* for *pradhana*.
[2] *tadvidāṁ ca smṛtiśīle* is a paraphrase of Manusmṛti II. 6.
[3] The vulgate reading is *acetasaḥ*.

lacking in consciousness on account of absence of discrimination. They torture me (by performing austerities) because they do not follow the scriptural injunctions.

XVII. 7

Food is also threefold, with distinctions of *sattva* etc., so also sacrifice, austerities and charity. [This is stated in the verse beginning with] *āhāras tv api.*

XVII. 10

Now the verse beginning *yātayāmaṁ*: [*Yātayāmaṁ*] is that whose time is past (i.e. stale).

XVII. 11

"Having concentrated the mind" [*manaḥ samādhāya*], that is, having calmed it with firm resolution.

XVII. 12

[Now the clause] *dambhārthaṁ*: Pretence (*dambha*), that is, that people may know me to be this kind of person (without one sincerely wanting to be such).

XVII. 13

[A *yajña* is *tāmasa* if it is] *vidhihīna* (devoid of proper ordinance), that is, devoid of the proper rites mentioned in the scriptures—that (kind of a) sacrifice is more elaborately described by adjectives such as "in which no food is distributed" (*asṛṣṭānnaṁ*) etc.

XVII. 14

Now the verse beginning *devadvija*: *Ārjavam* means straightforwardness. *Dhṛṣṭatā* (brashness) stops at nothing (i.e. keeps no secrets).

XVII. 15

The nature of truth is described by (the expression) *priyahitam*—sweet and salutary. A statement which is agreeable at the moment (when it is uttered) and beneficial later on is called truth and not merely stating things as they actually happened.

XVII. 16

[The expression *bhāvasaṁśuddhi* means] due purity of motive.

XVII. 17, 18, 19

Now the verses beginning with *śraddhayā* and ending with *udāhṛtam*: Faith is also involved in the three kinds of austerities (*tapas*). *Sāttvika tapas* involves faith which is pervaded by the *sattva guṇa*; *rājasika tapas* involves faith in the quality of *rajas*, that is, pretence (*dambha*) etc.; and (the kind of austerity) firmly established in *tamas* involves faith (in such activities pervaded by *tamas* as) in causing another's destruction. Thus the threefold austerities are accompanied by (a corresponding kind of) faith—this is what the sage says.

XVII. 20, 21, 22

Now the verse beginning with *dātavyaṁ*: The mere injunction to "give" is to be followed—this is the cause of the defectiveness (of the sacrifice) on account of the defect of giving with reluctance, a niggardly amount, etc. And the act of charity is falsified (i.e. not performed as it should be) on account of the falsification of what is to be given away in it etc. In this way the ritual acts of worldly people in accordance with the threefold intent such as *sāttvika* etc., have been explained.

XVII. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

Now how do those, whose understanding has gone beyond the perils of the three *guṇas*, perform ritual acts; their manner is described [in the verse] beginning with *auṁ tat sad*, etc. *Auṁ*, *tat* and *sat*—by these three words there is the description, the encounter, of *brahman*. Therein by *auṁ* it is indicated that the scriptural injunction (regarding *yajña* etc.) should be accepted as long as one is alive. By *tat* a pronoun, which is only expressive of the general and incapable of any specific determination, the non-seeking of the fruits (of ritual acts offered) in the *brahman* is spoken of, because of the absence of any seeking without the special mention of what is sought after. Besides, even in the case of the acceptance of all particular actions, of all fruits, (there is the absence of the attainment of any special fruit) on account of non-attachment to any special fruit although one is the performer of all action. *Sat*, by this report, praise is mentioned. *Yajñas* etc., though performed, acquire the quality of *tamas* if performed with the thought that (the performance of) *yajñas* etc. is evil. Therefore regarded as a duty (even though) performed with a specific result in mind, (a sacrifice performed as) *sat* is not a

cause of bondage, so that even those who perform *yajña* etc., regarding it as a duty, are not bound. With this very intention has it been said in the *ādiparvan*:

> *Tapas* is no bondage, study is no bondage, natural performance of Vedic rites is no bondage (even) much seizure of wealth is no bondage, but all of them, affected by attachment, are bondage.

[The word] *kalka* [repeatedly used in the verse cited above] means bondage. [The word] *svābhāvika* [in the verse quoted above, in the expression *svabhāviko vedavidhiḥ*] means that the Vedas etc., along with the six ancillary sciences, should be studied by the *brāhmaṇa* without any specific reason (i.e. desire). [The word] *prasahya* [similarly in the above verse] means in a manner consistent with what is scripturally or socially acceptable. [The word *bhāvopahataṁ* is to be understood thus:] these are the cause of bondage when affected by a mind which is united with the three *guṇas* such as *sattva* etc. Therefore *yajña* etc., so long as the body exists, should be performed, and action should be performed for its sake such as earning, etc.

Or else, by *auṁ* is propounded the pacification of the phenomenon (of *saṁsāra*); by *tat* the nature (of the supreme) free from desire, only touched by the nascent wave of the universe and by *sat*, notwithstanding the perfection (of the supreme principle) the coming into being of various natures which causes plurality in the (reality to appear), which possesses tranquility and (perfect) freedom of will. Moreover, it has been said that (the word *sat*) can be used in the sense of reality and goodness.[4] Thereby, having first presented the supremely tranquil form (of *brahman*), that supreme form (is) then sported, which is accompanied with waves in the form of desire—pervaded by the desire to give, to perform sacrifice, to perform austerities in the midst of which the whole body of ceremonies and the performers of *dāna*, *yajña* and *tapas* enjoined in Hindu religious law is fulfilled. This indeed is the equilibrium state of the triad and the natural form free from destruction—so then, whose, what, how, wherefrom and whereby should any fruit (of such action) come about?

XVII. 28

Now the ritual act performed by one lacking in faith, of *tāmasic* nature, is futile in every way and only results in causing fatigue to the

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[4] Bhagavadgītā XVII. 26 (a) is quoted here.

body of performers brought together to perform it. (Therefore) never should one be lacking in faith—(this is the purport of the verse beginning with) *aśraddhayā*: *Asat* is that which is not recommended; therefore for those endeavouring to perform recommended ritual everything is easily achieved.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> The intentness is the same as of the (regular) performer of ritual: and the ritual act is also the same, even so for those possessed of true knowledge (the same ritual act) ends up as one leading to *mokṣa*.

Here ends the seventeenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha, composed by the great Śaiva ācārya, Abhinavagupta.

CHAPTER XVIII

XVIII. 1

Arjuna said the verse beginning *sannyāsasya*: It has been said earlier "he is a *tyāgin*",[1] and "he is the wise one",[2] and also "he is a *sannyāsin* and *yogin*, and not one who is without a fire"[3] etc. Hence this question (of Arjuna being one who is) desirous of knowing, through hearing (from Kṛṣṇa) who is superior between the *tyāgin* and the *sannyāsin*.[4]

XVIII. 2

Herein the Lord replied [through the verse beginning with] *kāmyānāṁ*: Optional rites (*kāmya*) are such as those of *agniṣṭoma*, etc. Now the line beginning with *sarvakarma*: *Tyāga* (or renunciation) means the renunciation of the fruits of all actions—obligatory (*nitya*); occasionally obligatory (*naimittika*) and optional (*kāmya*)—even upon their being performed. Whatever remains to be said touching (the matters discussed) in this chapter has already been discussed in detail by (scholars such as) Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara and others, so what is the

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[1] See Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 11; this quotation, though cited as *pūrvokta*, really occurs later.

[2] See Bhagavadgītā IV. 18.

[3] See Bhagavadgītā VI. 1.

[4] Read *śravaṇād viśeṣaṁ jijñāsoḥ* etc.

point in attempting a display of redundancy when we are committed to abide by our resolve to shed light only on the concealed meaning[5] of the verses of the Gītā (in this commentary).

XVIII. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Now in order to arrive at a distinct conclusion in this matter (the Lord) presents the various opinions [through the verses beginning with] *tyājyaṁ doṣavat* etc. The bad fruit, which is sinful because it involves the killing of animals, etc., [in a sacrifice] should be given up and not all the good fruit—some hold this distinct view in the matter of *tyāga*, like the Sāṅkhyans. Others, in the garb of Mīmāṁsakas, maintain that the true significance of a sacrifice can only be understood through the scriptures. Moreover, "Therefore the killing involved in the performance of Vedic ritual (is no killing at all)"—with this kind of logic (it is said) that (the killing) which is a component an obligatory sacrificial duty is not violence. For in that respect the general scriptural precept "do not kill" is not binding;[6] (on this view) killing is that which is carried out by falcons etc. alone [and not the one practised in ritual. In this respect there is the quote:] "Concerning one's share of the fruit (of a rite), the emotional conviction is the determinant". One should not give up sacrifices etc., even though they involve killing, etc. Thus do those learned people hold, who depend solely on the scriptures for discriminating between what ought and ought not to be done. In this respect, there is the following judgement: Because, on account of the striking differences in the nature of the *guṇas* as indicated earlier, *tyāga*, being performed with a mentality pervaded by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* leads to the appearance of states in keeping with their special nature. Verily *tyāga* (i.e. true *tyāga*) consists of the cessation of action on the part of the knowers of *brahman* by performing actions with a sense of equanimity in success and failure, by avoiding attachment and aversion and by the absence of the desire for the fruit (of action). Therefore was it said: having done *rājasika* or *tāmasika tyāga*, there is no connection with the fruit (of that *tyāga*). But from the giving up of *sāttvika tyāga*, there follows the fruit (due) from the obedience of scriptural injunctions. Moreover, again, in the case of the sage

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[5] See Introductory verse no. 5.

[6] Read *tatra bādhanāt* as *tatrābādhanāt*.

who has shaken off the hold of the *guṇas* (on him), is *tyāga*-talk really appropriate(?).

XVIII. 12

Now the verse beginning *aniṣṭam*: [In the case] of those who are not *tyāgins* (*atyāgināṁ*), that is, those who are pervaded by [the *guṇas*, *karma* bears fruit].

XVIII. 13

Now it is preached [through the verses beginning with] *pañcaitāni* etc., that even in a situation where one performs worldly actions, there being five causes present (which are responsible) in (the fruition of) an action, these people, blinded by ignorance, impose upon the *ātman* the burden of being the whole agent of action and thus through their own (mis-)understanding bind themselves, while [the fact of the matter is that] there is really no such bondage. [The word *kṛtānta* should be understood thus:] that with respect to which a conclusion has been reached is *kṛtānta*, the same as *siddhānta*.

XVIII. 14

By *adhiṣṭhāna* is meant the object. By *daivam* is meant (*karmic*) merit and demerit earned earlier on (in previous lives). These five, *adhiṣṭhāna* etc., assembled together, are the causes in the case of all actions. Others have said, in a somewhat forced way, [that *adhiṣṭhāna* has to be interpreted thus:] that by which all action is presided over is *adhiṣṭhāna*, as described by the word *karma yoga* [and should be understood] as denoting the five-fold modifications which result when the *buddhi* takes on a disposition characterized by *rajas*, namely (1) firmness, (2) faith, (3) joy, (4) no desire to know and (5) the desire to know. The *kartā* or doer is the one who aims at the fruit and possesses the distinguishing characteristic of *buddhi*. *Karaṇam* or means are the mind, eye, etc.; (means internal) as well as external, such as a dagger etc. *Ceṣṭā* or motion is that of *prāṇa*, *apāna*, etc. (the various "winds"). By the word *daiva* or Fate are indicated Right (*dharma*) and Wrong (*adharma*) and by their use are indicated all the states arising in the *buddhi* from them. Others (erroneously) take *adhiṣṭhāna* to be God, on account of being of imperfect wisdom because of possessing an unsettled mind. He, however, who performs action with a firm rejection of the ego and as purified (in this attitude) in a hundred subtle ways as mentioned

earlier, does not become involved (with the fruit of action) on account of his perfect wisdom — this is what is meant.

XVIII. 18

Now the verse beginning *jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ*: [The expression *karma-codanā* is to be understood as:] inclination towards, desire for performing action; at that time [of engagement in action there is the predication of the distinction between] the knowledge (*jñāna*), the known (*jñeya*) and the knower (*jñātā*) as heard of in the scriptures, on account of being firmly fixed in ignorance only by those who wholeheartedly accept aiming at the fruit of action through an egocentric understanding that — "I will enjoy this because the action has been performed by me", at the time of (engaging in action). And at the time of the completion of action (only they) can be referred to in terms of (the distinction between) *karaṇa* (means), *karma* (action) and *kartā* (the agent of action) because of the attachment (on their part to the fruit of action). Therefore there is no attachment on the part of the *yogins*, towards them the question of using expressions such as *karaṇa* etc. does not arise but rather only that of *jñānaṁ* etc. alone — this is what is meant.

XVIII. 19, 20

Now in order to show the distinction between these six[7] briefly, on the basis of the distinction between the *guṇas* (the Lord) says [the verse beginning with] *jñānaṁ karma ca*. In the doctrines of Sāṅkhya, wherein a count of the *guṇas* is made, knowledge (*jñāna*) etc. are spoken of as threefold — (O Arjuna, now) listen to that; this is the (syntactical) concordance (between the verb and what it sets out to describe). By the use of the word *jñāna*, two kinds of *karaṇa* (means) are spoken of: [(1) the means involved] in the acquisition of knowledge and [(2) the action involved] in the performance of action. In a similar fashion [the use of the word] *karma* indicates *jñeya* (the object of knowledge) and *kārya* (the object of action) [and the word] *kartā* indicates *jñātā* (the knower) and *kartā* (the doer). Therein, in the set of three verses beginning with *sarva-bhūteṣu* etc.,[8] the triple forms of *jñāna* and *karaṇa* (of knowledge and action) are spoken of. Hence the instrumental case in *yena*.[9] To this extent is

[7] Namely — (1) *jñāna*; (2) *jñeya*; (3) *jñātā*; (4) *karaṇa*; (5) *karma* and (6) *kartā*, vide Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 18.

[8] I.e. Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 20-22.

[9] See Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 20.

the commonality between *jñāna* and *karaṇa* spoken of. With the set of three verses beginning with *niyatam*,[10] *karma* is of two kinds—in the form of *jñeya* (the object of knowledge) and *kārya* (the object of action). Through the three verses beginning with *muktasaṅga*[11] etc., the nature of the two kinds of *kartā* (i.e. the *jñātā* and the *kartā*) has been briefly (portrayed) and in order to propound the distinction in the nature of *karaṇa* (or action), chosen for special consideration, the three kinds of intellect are portrayed. By this means the threefoldness of items even apart from *karaṇa* has also been indicated. Now because of the dependence of action[12] on the performance of obligatory duties and notwithstanding the fivefoldness[13] of the obligatory duties in the form of *dhṛti* etc.; *śraddhā* having been already spoken of and *vividiṣā* and *avividiṣā* being subsumed under *dhṛti* and *sukha*, the threefoldness of *dhṛti* and *sukha* is spoken of [through verses beginning with] *dhṛteś ca* etc.[14] and *sukham tv idānīṁ*[15] etc. Thus is said [the verse beginning with] *sarvabhūteṣu* etc.

XVIII. 21

Now the verse beginning *pṛthaktvena*: [*Rājasa jñāna* is characterised by] the feeling such as "Herein I love", "Herein I hate", among the (creatures) divided into separate categories on account of being different such as gods, men, etc.

XVIII. 22

[*Tāmasa jñāna* is characterized] by the adoption of hatred, love, etc. without reason, without due reflection on the cause, under the influence of the onrush of instinct. That is called *tāmasa*.

XVIII. 23

Niyata is that action which ought to be performed (even though) it may be pervaded by many troubles such as ignorance etc. Not saying "I am the doer" under the influence of infatuation, etc., having such an attitude, nature, and good conduct, one does not

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[10] I.e. Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 23-25. There should be no period in the Nirṇayasāgara text after *ślokatrayeṇa*.
[11] I.e. Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 26.
[12] Emend *kārana* to *karaṇa* in the text.
[13] See Abhinavagupta's gloss on Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 14.
[14] See Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 29.
[15] See Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 36.

become egoistic. Only as an outward act, in order to fulfil (my obligations) I do it even though a *yogin*, this is indicated by the possessive suffix[16] (in the word *yogin*) and thus such a use is not forbidden.

XVIII. 27

[He is not] seized by joy or sorrow in success or failure.

XVIII. 28

Nikṛti means pitilessness.

XVIII. 29

Now the verse beginning *buddhi*: *Buddhi* means resolution. *Dhṛti* means satisfaction. Everyone, having performed a good or evil act, in the end always reflects thus "that which was to be done, has that been achieved by this act"? Otherwise what reason could there be for the cessation of activities? Therefore everyone possesses *dhṛti*—this is the intended meaning. The meaning is well-known and indeed has been expounded.

XVIII. 31

Ayathāvat ("not as it should be") means improper.

XVIII. 33

He carries on all activities of mind, *prāṇas* and the senses through *yoga*. As for example, thinking thus, "what have I to do with sense-enjoyments etc., I shall always revel in my own *ātman*".

XVIII. 34

[The *rājasika* mentality desires the fruit of action but] on account of the context in which the action is performed and not so much on account of instinct [as is the case with *tāmasa* mentality].

XVIII. 35

The *tāmasika* (foul) type of mentality (*dhṛti*) is that by which satisfaction is found by being devoted to sleep, discord, etc.

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[16] See Pāṇini 5. 2, 115; also 6. 2, 79.

XVIII. 37

At the time (of the practice) of repeated disciplining it feels like poison on account of the difficulty in abandoning attachment to the senses which has been practised over hundreds of lives. As has been said in the Vedas: "(The path) is rugged, hard to traverse, sharp like a razor", etc.[17] When the Self is at peace, the *buddhi* becomes clear. Because of the absence of the need of anything else.

XVIII. 38

[That happiness is called *rājasa* which is] born of the mutual contact between the senses and sense-objects by itself (as) of the eye on account of contact with form.

XVIII. 39

That happiness which comes from sleep, sloth, wickedness and heedlessness, which has been explained earlier, is *tāmasa sukha*.

XVIII. 40

In this way, the capacity to produce a variety of the fruits (of action) on the part of actions (*karmas*) relating to *kartā*, *karma*, *karaṇa*,[18] *buddhi*, and *sukha*, which differ according to the differences of *sattva* (*guṇa*) etc., on account of the conjunction of their mutual correlation and the hindered-hinderer relation and the infinite differentiation (possible) through the combination, permutation and aggregation etc., (of all of these) has been logically demonstrated in detail, as also the mysteriousness of *karma* referred to aphoristically earlier. None of these creatures from the gods down to immovable ones are beyond contact with the three *guṇas*. As has been said: "From an insect right up to Brahmā none is really happy".[19] Real happiness belongs to the mind which has gone beyond the *guṇas* and to none else—this is the intended meaning. Thus, to a degree, was the threefold nature of the six, *dhṛti* etc., propounded one by one. Among them he, in whom an abundance of Sattvika quality is present, has attained to divine attributes—he in this world is ready for *jñāna*. "You are such a one"—Arjuna is thus encouraged. Now this is said. If now you will engage in action with this enlightened under-

[17] Kaṭha Upaniṣad IV. 2, 14? The Kaṭha text has *niśita* in place of *viṣama*.

[18] Read *kāraṇa* as *karaṇa* vide B.O.R.I. manuscript.

[19] The quotation could also be rendered somewhat differently.

standing, then, on account of engaging in your own *dharma* and on account of being hallowed by *jñāna*, no *karmic* bondage shall be yours. If you do not accept this, then indeed that will come about on account of your natural inclination because a class of creatures abides in its inherent nature. Therefore everything is determined by its own nature; and if somehow their own individual natures are obscured on account of some flaw, then even if it is so for a while, when the obstructing element has disappeared the (individual) attains to his nature which now manifests itself. For such is the nature of the *varṇas*.

XVIII. 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50

In *karmic* engagement which is bound to occur in this way, there will then be the apportionment of fruit; this is said [in the verse beginning with] *brāhmaṇakṣatriya*. The nature of the Brāhmaṇas, etc., indeed as portrayed in the delineation of the division of action, is bound to be transgressed. You have the nature of a *kṣatriya*, even though you do not wish it, your nature, called *svabhāva*, serves to compel you unfailingly, only one compelled by it has connection with spiritual merit and demerit. Therefore perform actions, keeping the proofs of experiential knowledge explained by me in the forefront. That being so, your bond will be snapped. The purpose of this great statement is to make him gird up his loins. The meaning of the intervening sentences is clear.

XVIII. 51

In brief the state of *jñāna*, already spoken of earlier, is now spoken of convincingly without verbiage [in the verse beginning with] *buddhyā viśuddhyā* etc. All of this has almost been already explained so that is not done again.

XVIII. 61

This God, the supreme soul, must indeed be accepted as a refuge. In Him, the Presider, the Doer, the Knower, pervaded by His *ātman*, crystal-clear, *karmas* cannot dwell.[20] The fickle-minded young of the deer, whose only strength consists of their ability to take to flight, do not, of their own accord, resort to the state of going about their bûsiness of rumination skilfully when the lion-cub sits in the cave

[20] Disregard period after *viṣpaṣṭe* in the text.

whose valiant lustre is made manifest by the multitudes of clusters of pearls, which have fallen from the temples of elephants in rut, torn apart by the extremely sharp ends of his claws.

XVIII. 62, 63

Having started (by saying) *tameva śaraṇaṁ gaccha* ("Take refuge in Him") the lord, making the supporting statement (in the line beginning with) *mat prasādāt* ("By my grace"), brings together in unity the *paramātman*, Īśvara and Vāsudeva: it is this knowledge which has been called even more esoteric than that of esoteric Vedānta;[21] "not being thought over" it brings duality to light. Having thought over this and having considered in toto the intended message — this is what is meant. Although that intended meaning has been expressed by us as suited the occasion in a direct manner, even so that most excellent (meaning) is presented (here) clearly and with full consideration (of all points). The mind is never satisfied in either depicting it or hearing of it.

NOTE: Matprasādāt constitutes a significant difference between Abhinavagupta's text of the Gītā and the vulgate and critical versions, which have the form *tat-prasādāt*. The difference is so significant that most of Abhinavagupta's gloss turns on the use of *mat* in place of *tat* here.

XVIII. 65, 66

"What has been identified herein as the 'most esoteric' now listen to that knowledge" — hence are said [the lines beginning with] *iṣṭo'si* and ending with *mā śucaḥ*. *Manmanā bhava* [occupy thy mind with me] herein among the scriptures it is offering to *brahman* which is primary — this is settled. It is said that the scripture is meaningful in the case of one who causes the offering to be made to *brahman*; and (the Lord) says *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. [Having given up all *dharmas*]. In the matter of this adventitious killing of relations, etc., in the battle — I am the doer of all that, give up any sense of your own *dharma*; and banishing the thought from the mind that as the killing of *ācāryas* etc. is prohibited, *adharma* shall fall to my share; go to refuge in me who is One, the Doer of all, the supreme lord, and Independent, because I am the foundation of the inner nature of all. Thus is it that I, all-knowing, shall release thee from all sins. Do not grieve. Don't be confused about your duty.

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[21] Refer to *guhyād guhyataram* of Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 63.

XVIII. 67, 68

Now the verse beginning *idaṁ te*: The concealment of this knowledge on the ground that it is not meant for all the people does not confer salvation. Having rent asunder the knots of sin through austerity (*tapas*) one inclines towards mature benign austerity. First (comes) austerity (*tapas*), from *tapas* comes faith (*śraddhā*); that is devotion (*bhakti*). *Śraddhā*, having arisen, sometimes does not grow, being seen in a momentary flash like lightning. Thereafter, after it has grown, the desire to hear (sacred scriptures) arises. This much too, in some cases, is in an atheistic subject such as the dry science of Sāṅkhya or in a theistic subject. With some it arises on account of desire for fruit (of action or devotion)—because putting the fruit alone in the forefront it uses God and the *ātman* as instruments—and on that account becomes contemptible. As has been said, "Man (is bound) because he desires action, and because in action he desires fruit". In this way, from both sides there is enmity, disrespect towards God—this is the meaning.

XVIII. 68

Now the line beginning *mad-bhakti*. This is the expression of devotion towards me—(he) who shall declare this portrayal of mine among my devotees, among the devotees—face to face with them, shall broadcast it in the manner prescribed in the scriptures—he comes to my being, this is the proper method, not mere rhetoric. So elsewhere.

NOTE: Abhinavagupta emphasizes that the above verse should be read as constituting the *vidhi* for teaching the Gītā and not merely as *arthavāda*.

XVIII. 73

Arjuna spoke. Herein, in this way, by saying "My delusion is destroyed etc.," Arjuna's readiness to engage in battle has come about but proper knowledge of *brahman* has not been attained—indicating this (sage Vyāsa) creates room for the Anugītā which is yet to come.

XVIII. 74, 75, 76, 77, 78

- Sañjaya said [the verse beginning with] *ity ahaṁ*. Concluding now the dialogue with the words of Sañjaya the mere recollection of it in the end is said to confer the experience of the *para brahman*—

who assumes (herein) a crystal-clear, transcendental and experiential formulation—because of its closely knit manner of argumentation and the absence of any other (thought) created by the succession of constant reflection (induced by it). In this way, by knowing the truth from the mere recollection of the dialogue between the Lord and Arjuna, come glory, victory and wealth.

On this chapter there is the following summary verse:

> Having shattered a mind disturbed by qualities of *sattva* etc., and churning with the delusion caused by (discursive) knowledge; having obtained to Viṣṇu, who is beyond doubts, through the beauty of realization of one's own *ātman*; one whose senses are buried only in their own transactions out of the fluency of his own nature, whatever he does playfully, all that now reaches to Śaṅkara.

Here ends the eighteenth chapter of the Gītārthasaṅgraha composed by the great Śaiva *ācārya* Abhinavagupta.

CONCLUDING VERSES

1. There was once Śrī Kātyāyana, like unto Vararuci, the satisfaction of those with flashing intellects; his lineage was adorned by the exceedingly learned scholar known as Saucuka, of firm intellect; after him was born his son the *brāhmaṇa* Bhūtirāja, a great soul, by whom all the worlds which had fallen into darkness were rescued, as by the sun.
2. Abhinavagupta, a bee hovering at his lotus-feet, composed this Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha, under the influence of the promptings of the pious twice-born Loṭaka.[1]
3. This verse is not translated. It does not appear in the B.O.R.I. text and in the Nirṇayasāgara text it appears to be corrupt.
4. There is Śakti with an ever-new form (*abhinava*); god Śiva is protected by her (*gupta*); I thus worship the doubly flawless form of Abhinavagupta Śiva.

This Śrīmadbhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha is now complete. This is the work of the *ācārya* Abhinavaguptapāda who achieved the realization

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[1] Read *saddvijaloṭaka-* for *saddvijaloka-*.

of the *ātman* as pure consciousness as a result of meditating on the feet of Śiva.

May blessings be plentiful for the pious devotees by the grace of God.

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